

NEVADA SILVER TRAILS SPECIAL EDITION

NEVADA

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2011

M A G A Z I N E

17 HISTORIC
TOWNS

10 GHOST
TOWNS

DEATH VALLEY
NATIONAL PARK

5 LINCOLN
COUNTY'S
STATE PARKS

AMARGOSA
OPERA HOUSE

SILVER
TRAILS
TERRITORY

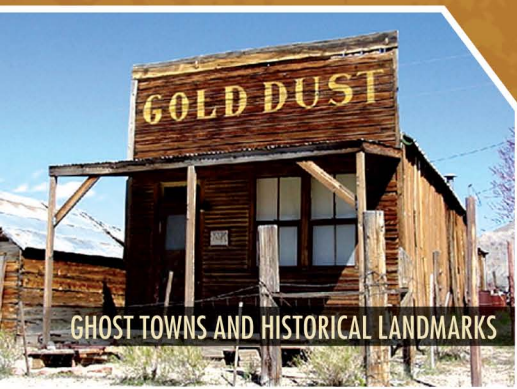
34TH ANNUAL
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PICTURE HUNT**
PHOTO CONTEST

75th ANNIVERSARY
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Mad Mike, Yerington, Nevada



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Round Mountain
Scotty's Castle
Shoshone
Silver Peak / Weepah
Tecopa
Tonopah
Yerington

NEVADA SILVER TRAILS SPECIAL EDITION

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Cover Photo:
Dave Harrison

Such breathtaking scenes surely played a part in Lincoln County's Cathedral Gorge State Park being named one of the first state parks in Nevada.

FEATURES



PHOTO: BRIAN BEFFORT

34th Annual Great Nevada Picture Hunt

Following the theme of our 75th-anniversary year—Nevada's territories—our 2011 photo contest is a celebration of the best images from the state's six tourism territories: Las Vegas Territory, Pony Express Territory, Cowboy Country, Indian Territory, Nevada Silver Trails, and Reno-Tahoe Territory. Also new this year is a "Then & Now" category, in which photographers were asked to re-create former *Nevada Highways* and *Parks* or *Nevada Magazine* cover images. And the winners are...



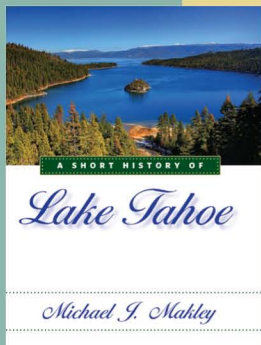
PHOTO: MATTHEW B. BROWN

Touring Nevada Silver Trails' Towns

From Alamo to Yerington, the towns in Nevada Silver Trails are historic and varied. After learning about the origins of these south-central Nevada burgs, and what they offer travelers today, you'll realize that these once-mineral-rich towns still hold plenty of treasures.

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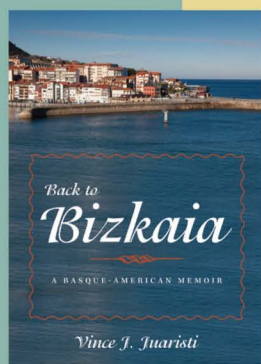
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A Short History of Lake Tahoe

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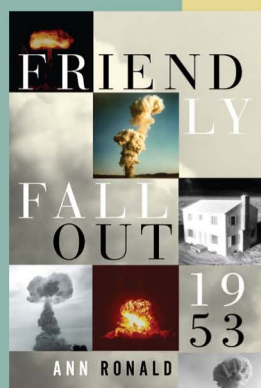
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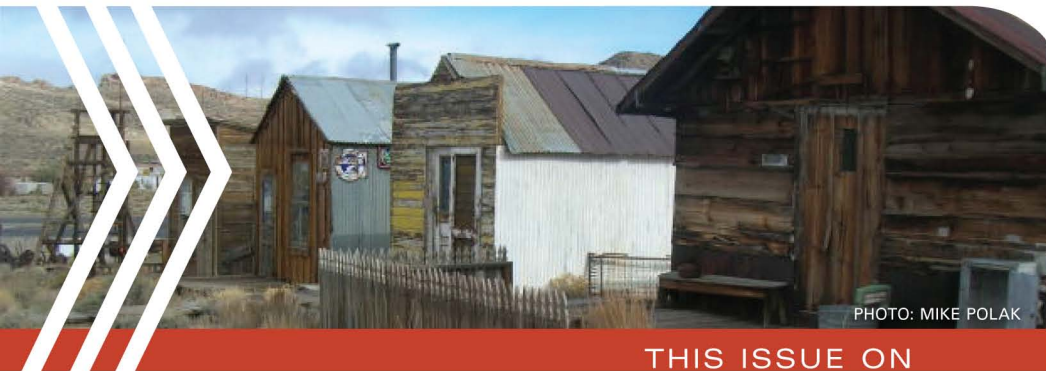


PHOTO: MIKE POLAK

THIS ISSUE ON

NEVADAMAGAZINE.COM

- ▶ Learn the little-known story of Nicaraguan immigrant **Ferminia Sarras**, for whom the town of Mina is named. By **Jeffrey R. Richardson**
- ▶ See one travel writer's top-10 list of can't-miss stops on **U.S. Highway 6**, which winds through the heart of Nevada Silver Trails. By **Malerie Yolen-Cohen**
- ▶ Read the story of a Las Vegas resident and adventurer who convinces his 14-year-old neighbor to take a road trip to desolate **Delamar**. By **Greg McFarlane**
- ▶ Step into the history of Tonopah and its surrounds at the town's **Central Nevada Museum** (pictured above). By **Mike Polak**
- ▶ While volunteering at **Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge**, this couple "became enamored with the stark beauty of this place." By **Anthony F. & Marguerite Breda**

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WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

Alan Hefner: Saw your [television] segment on "Face the State" and thought I would check your FB page out.—**Facebook**

fraginat0r: ...all the places featured here are about 45 mins. to an hour drive from where I live (Tonopah). Some people hate it here, but I LOVE it, I guess you kinda have to love the desert though, LOL.—**YouTube**, commenting on "Nevada Ghost Towns."

NevadaMatters: Thank you Matt Brown, Editor, for an excellent [radio] interview on Nevada Matters and congrats on 75 Years of service with Nevada Magazine.—**Twitter**

Pyramid Lake Tribe: Be sure to check out all of the great Pyramid Lake stories in the Indian Territory edition of Nevada Magazine.—**Twitter**

WORTH A CLICK

nevadasilvertrails.com

Find a blog, where to go, travel tools, a travel guide, interactive map—even share your experience—at Nevada Silver Trails' official website.

FEATURED PHOTO COLLECTION

Nevada Silver Trails: Visit our Flickr profile, and click on "Collections," then "Nevada Silver Trails," to see images from our travels in Nevada, including Boundary Peak, Cathedral Gorge State Park, Hawthorne Army Depot, and Lunar Crater.

FEATURED PHOTO COLLECTION

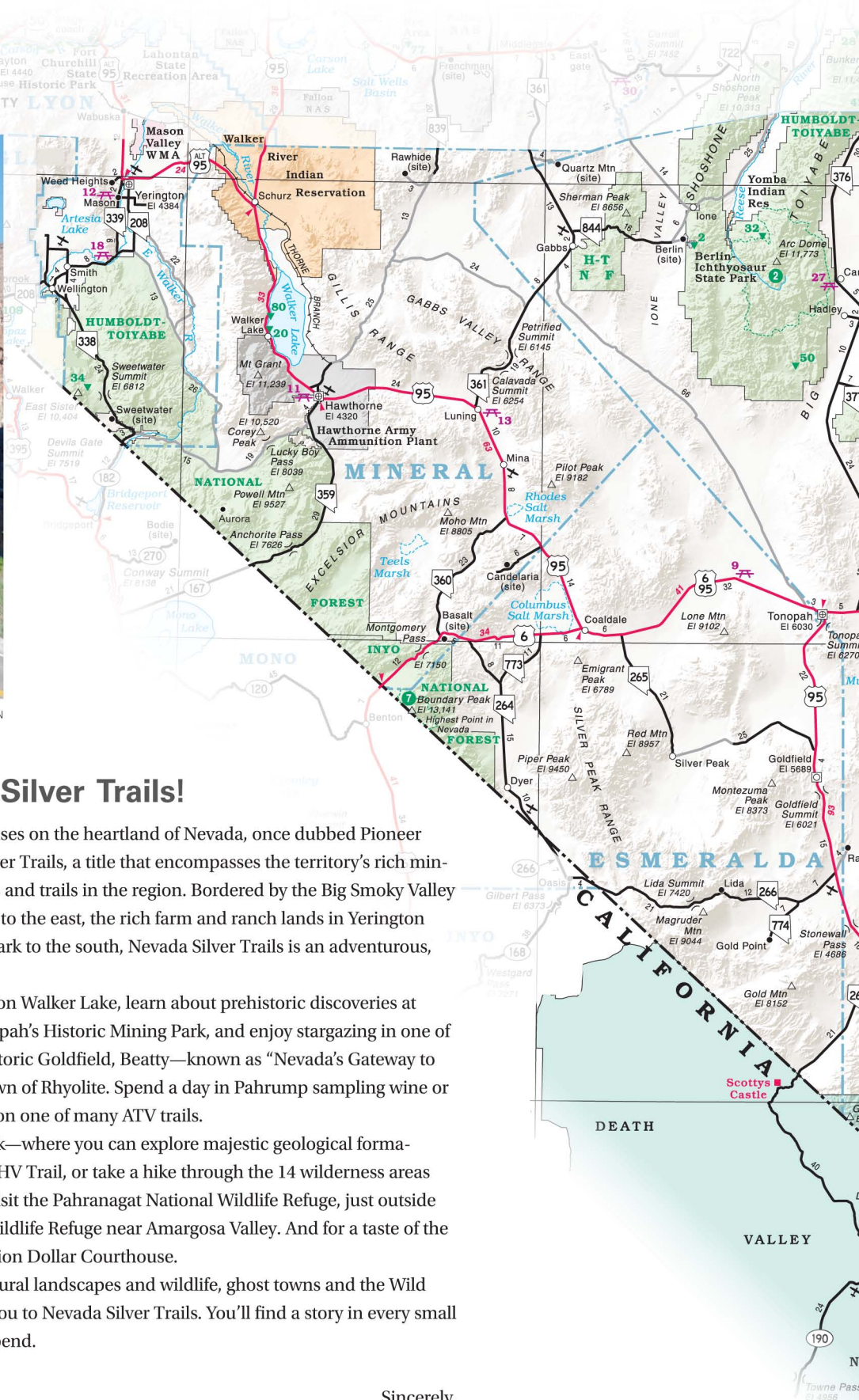
75 Years of Covers: 2011 marks *Nevada Magazine's* Diamond Anniversary. Enjoy 75 years (1936-2011) of *Nevada Highways and Parks* and *Nevada Magazine* history by visiting our Flickr profile and clicking on "Collections," then "Cover Images."

FEATURED VIDEO

Channel 2 Interview: Watch publisher Janet Geary and editor Matthew B. Brown on KTVN's "Face the State," hosted by Bill Brown. Visit nevadamagazine.com, and click on "Press" in the drop-down menu under "the magazine."



PHOTO: MATTHEW B. BROWN



Welcome to Nevada Silver Trails!

This edition of *Nevada Magazine* focuses on the heartland of Nevada, once dubbed Pioneer Territory and now known as Nevada Silver Trails, a title that encompasses the territory's rich mining history as well as the many highways and trails in the region. Bordered by the Big Smoky Valley to the north, Cathedral Gorge State Park to the east, the rich farm and ranch lands in Yerington to the west, and Death Valley National Park to the south, Nevada Silver Trails is an adventurous, diverse, historic, and scenic area.

Experience great boating and fishing on Walker Lake, learn about prehistoric discoveries at Berlin-Ichthyosaur State Park, tour Tonopah's Historic Mining Park, and enjoy stargazing in one of Nevada's darkest regions. Don't miss historic Goldfield, Beatty—known as "Nevada's Gateway to Death Valley"—and the nearby ghost town of Rhyolite. Spend a day in Pahrump sampling wine or exploring the nearby Spring Mountains on one of many ATV trails.

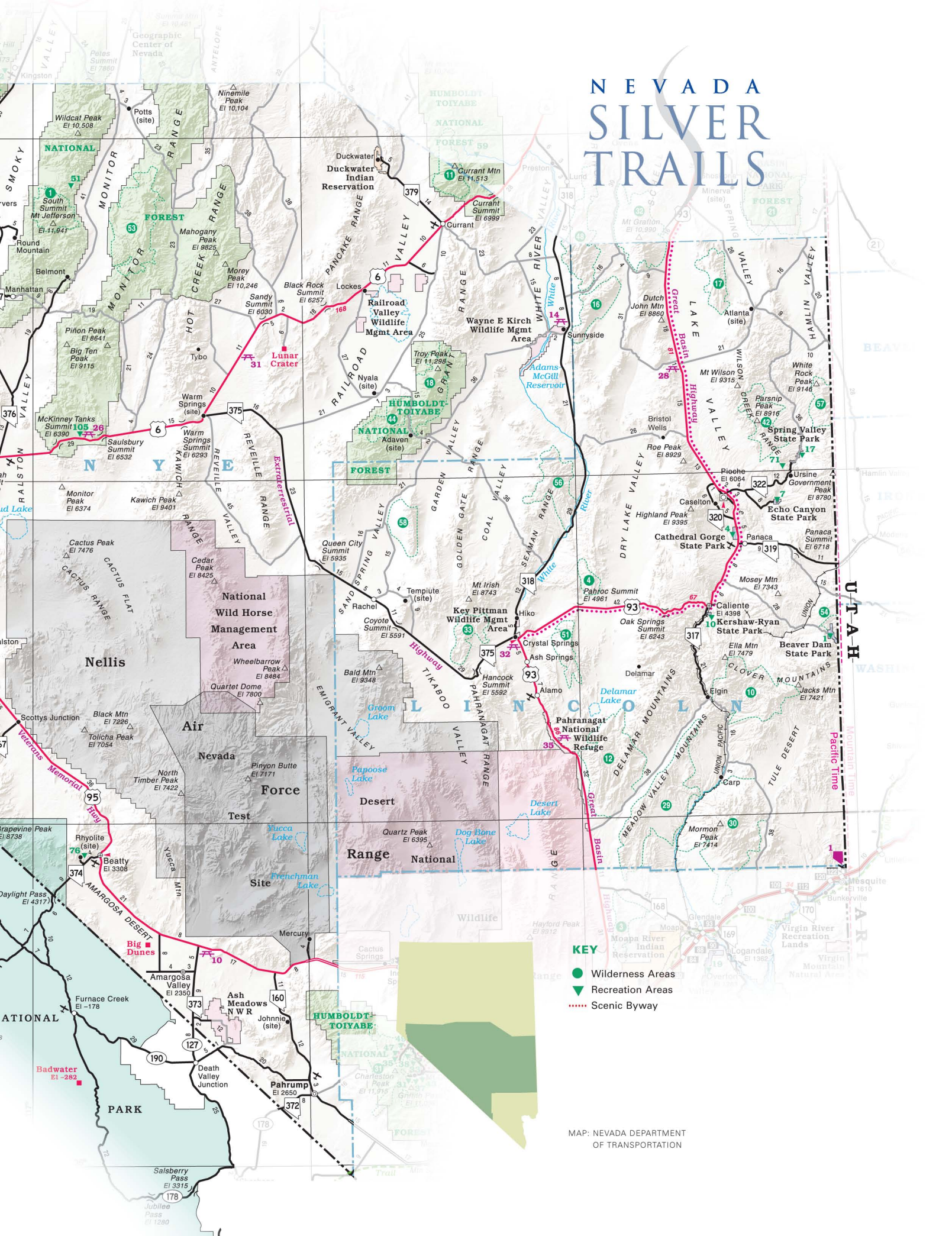
Don't miss Cathedral Gorge State Park—where you can explore majestic geological formations—go for a ride on the Silver State OHV Trail, or take a hike through the 14 wilderness areas near Caliente. Wildlife enthusiasts can visit the Pahrnagat National Wildlife Refuge, just outside of Alamo, and Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge near Amargosa Valley. And for a taste of the Wild West, visit Pioche and tour the Million Dollar Courthouse.

Whether you're looking for scenic natural landscapes and wildlife, ghost towns and the Wild West, or thrilling off-roading, we invite you to Nevada Silver Trails. You'll find a story in every small town—and an adventure around every bend.

Sincerely,

Marvin Minnick
Nevada Silver Trails Chair

NEVADA SILVER TRAILS



wanted: your input

Welcome to the new and improved *Nevada Magazine*. Well, at least we think so.

But our opinion doesn't matter nearly as much as yours—our loyal readers and subscribers—and that's why we're asking for your feedback as it relates to the change in format in this issue.

Actually, it's not all that revolutionary, as you won't notice a major difference until you get beyond page 50. It used to be, for many years, that the *Events & Shows* section started there. That roughly 30-page section made up the contents of *Events & Shows*, a separate publication distributed in Nevada's two major airports and various visitor centers throughout the state. More than one-third of *Nevada Magazine* was *Events & Shows*, which contained extensive calendar listings and stories spotlighting events and shows from around the Silver State.

Starting with this September/October issue, that is no longer the case. We are utilizing the magazine as a whole to include more photos and stories. Of course, we want to fill the pages of *Nevada Magazine* with your best interests in mind.

So tell us...do you want to see the daily and ongoing calendars back in the pages of *Nevada Magazine*? If so, in what format? Essentially we're searching for the best way to handle "events and shows," a subject that has been fundamental to the magazine's identity for many years. We will continue to cover events and shows in story form, of course, as you will find in this issue.

It is important to note that we are now producing two supplemental publications: *Las Vegas Events & Shows* and *Nevada Events & Shows*. These are free and available in the same venues that carried the aforementioned *Events & Shows*. Furthermore, you can download complete bimonthly PDF listings of events and shows—divided into Northern Nevada and Southern Nevada—at nevadamagazine.com.

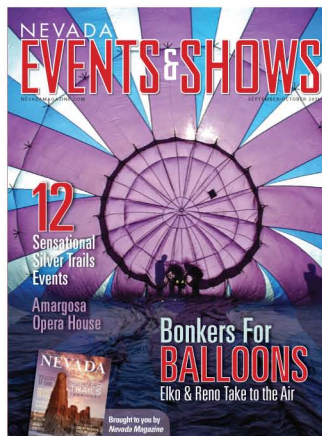
Please don't hesitate to e-mail (preferred) or call me, using the contact info below. Your opinion on this topic—and whatever else you'd like to see in the magazine—is extremely important to us.



Matthew B. Brown, Editor
editor@nevadamagazine.com
 775-687-0602



Las Vegas Events & Shows



Nevada Events & Shows

letters to the editor

BAD VANDALS!

I like your magazine. It has lots of good info for myself and the people I work with who plan to visit Nevada.

Everyone likes it.

What is with the vandals recently?

Someone cuts down the shoe tree, someone tags the rocks at Pyramid Lake, someone paints over the [pictographs] at Red Rock Canyon, and someone steals the loneliest phone. What is going on?

Mike Sheehan, Addison, Illinois

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

We appreciate all you guys do for the Nevada Northern [Railway]. I was going back through the past couple of issues of *Nevada Magazine* and saw things I had not seen before—like reader comments about Ely, event listings, and more. I really admire the general perspective of taking the road less traveled and not having it be all about Las Vegas.

Dany Feinstein, Nevada Northern Railway, Ely

HAPPY 75TH!

Congratulations to the *Nevada Magazine* staff on celebrating the publication's 75th anniversary. Such achievement represents the hard work a dedicated team of Nevadans has put forth since 1936, when the magazine debuted as *Nevada Highways and Parks*. I look forward to your continued contributions to the Silver State. My best wishes to you.

Harry Reid, U.S. Senator

CORRECTION: In the July/August 2011 issue of *Nevada Magazine*, on page 36, the caption for the photograph should have read that Cave Rock is located on Lake Tahoe's southeastern shore.



KNOW YOUR NEVADA

Dear Friends,

This edition of *Nevada Magazine* explores the many wonders of Nevada Silver Trails territory, an area that cuts a wide swath through the heart of our great state. Hiking, bird-watching, off-roading, and exploring historic buildings and ruins of former mining boomtowns are just a few of the many exciting activities that await you. The roads between towns may be long, but the rich rural charm and diversity of attractions will make a trip to this part of the Silver State well worth the adventurous traveler's while.

At the southern part of Silver Trails you will find Pahrump. This city, about an hour outside of Las Vegas, is home to the only wineries in the Mojave Desert. Going north, you can drive to destinations such as Beatty—the northern entrance to Death Valley National Park—and Goldfield—a former mining boomtown. Nearby you will find Tonopah, considered one of the best places in the country for stargazing.

After Tonopah, head east to the Extraterrestrial Highway—State Route 375—located near top-secret, mysterious Area 51. Rachel is the only



Lt. Gov. Brian K. Krolicki

town along the route. Drop by the Little A'Le'Inn and make "first contact" with the local residents, who are always happy to share stories that will excite and amaze.

The northern part of Silver Trails includes the living ghost town of Manhattan, where you can hunt for gold just like the eager hordes of prospectors did 100 years ago. A little further east is Belmont, where you can see some of Nevada's best-preserved historic buildings, including the original brick courthouse completed in 1876.

The upper northwest area is home to Hawthorne, called "The Most Patriotic Town in the U.S.," as red, white, and blue painted buildings can be seen throughout the town. It is home to the Hawthorne Army Depot, said to be the largest ammunition storage facility in the world, covering 147,000 acres.

I hope you have the chance to discover for yourself some of the towns, highways, and mysteries located in Nevada Silver Trails.

Brian K. Krolicki

Lieutenant Governor

Chairman — Nevada Commission on Tourism

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NEVADA news

◆ For the first time in more than 35 years, the Nevada Department of Wildlife started stocking **Lake Tahoe** with native **Lahontan Cutthroat Trout** this summer. When stocking is complete, NDOW will have planted about 22,000 nine-inch-long Mason Valley Hatchery-raised cutthroat into the lake. "[This] will give those fishing at Lake Tahoe a chance to catch a native trout, which hasn't been available in those waters for a long time," says NDOW fisheries biologist Kim Tisdale. ndow.org, 775-688-1500

◆ Recent tests conducted by the Nevada Department of Wildlife found **quagga mussels, a damaging invasive species**, in Northern Nevada's Lahontan and Rye Patch Reservoirs. While further tests are required to confirm these findings, NDOW reminds boaters to clean, drain, and dry all boats and equipment between every use to curb the spread of invasive mollusks and other non-native species. ndow.org, 775-688-1500

◆ The Bureau of Land Management opened the new **Black Rock Station Visitors Center** in Gerlach this summer. The \$2.9-million center, about 110 miles north of Reno, serves visitors to Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area, home to the Applegate and Lassen trails and the site of the annual counter-culture festival Burning Man. blm.gov/nv, 775-557-2503

◆ The country's oldest continually operated casino, **Railroad Pass Hotel & Casino** in Henderson, celebrates its 80th anniversary this year. Opened on August 1, 1931, the casino holds the fourth gaming license granted in the State of Nevada. railroadpass.com, 800-654-0877



FAMILY FUN

Kidville Opens at Las Vegas' Tivoli Village

Despite its reputation as America's adult playground, Las Vegas' family-friendly offerings are well known in their own right. The nationally and internationally acclaimed Kidville franchise opened its doors in Southern Nevada this summer.

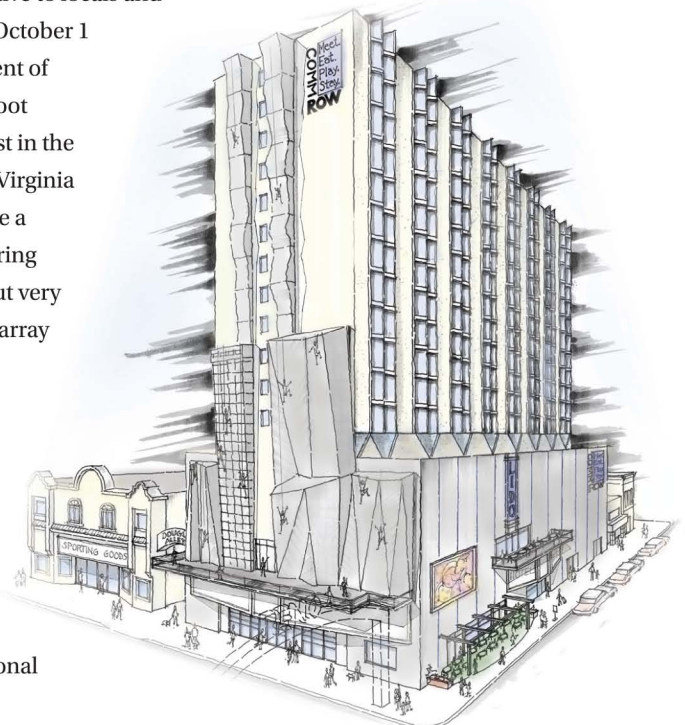
Specializing in early childhood development, the 10,000-square-foot facility offers classes, themed parties, a retail store with clothing and toys, and a kids' salon. The wide variety of classes offered at Kidville includes age-appropriate music appreciation, exercise classes, and painting courses, to name a few. The 16-week series of fall classes is set to start the week of September 12.

kidville.com, 702-233-9253

REDEVELOPMENT

Reno's CommRow Born from Fitzgeralds Facelift

In The Biggest Little City's ongoing crusade to revamp its downtown corridor and make it more attractive to locals and tourists, CommRow is set for an October 1 opening. The most striking element of the development will be its 164-foot artificial climbing wall—the tallest in the world—facing the Reno Arch on Virginia Street. Additional features include a 2,300-square-foot indoor bouldering park (rock climbing on shorter but very challenging facades), an eclectic array of eateries, two live performance venues, and the pet-friendly HANG Hotel slated to open in spring 2012. In summer 2012, CommRow plans to unveil the Adventure Deck atop its parking garage. The deck will include an outdoor bouldering park, BMX and skate parks, and a seasonal restaurant. commrow.com



DINING

Atlantis' Happy Hour Heavyweight

Thanks to Social Hour at Bistro Napa inside Reno's Atlantis Casino Resort Spa, workers in the Truckee Meadows have a compelling reason to punch the clock early. From 4 to 6 p.m. daily, the restaurant's lounge offers half-priced special appetizers, small plates, cocktails, and wines. A table can be hard to come by during the typically well-attended social hour, and with good reason. In addition to delectable libations such as the unique and refreshing Aku-Macku (pictured below with recipe), small plates include melt-in-your-mouth lamb sliders and wood-fired smoked salmon pizza (pictured at right). If Social Hour's refreshments don't fully sate your appetite, dinner items such as the vegetarian quinoa linguine and calamari steak—as well as cuts of beef worthy of the neighboring Atlantis Steakhouse—ensure guests will leave satisfied.

atlantiscasino.com/dining, 775-335-4539

Bistro Napa also plays host to special wine- and spirit-themed dinners once monthly. Upcoming dinner hosts include Stags Leap Wine, Thursday,

October 13, and Grey Goose Vodka, Thursday, November 17. On Tuesday, September 27, the Atlantis Steakhouse hosts the special Steakhouse 101 dinner and class. For reservations or more info, call 775-824-4411.

BISTRO NAPA'S AKU-MACKU

1.5 oz. Daiginjo sake
.5 oz. elderflower liqueur
.5 oz. Campari
.5 oz. simple syrup

Combine ingredients in a Boston shaker, shake very well, and pour over crushed ice into rocks glass.



PHOTOS: CHARLIE JOHNSTON



MUSEUM

Nevada State Museum Set to Open at Springs Preserve

One of Southern Nevada's top cultural and educational attractions, the Springs Preserve, is set to offer visitors even more when the Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas opens its new home at the Preserve in October. The new space, only minutes from the former Nevada State Museum at Lorenzi Park, is about twice the size of the old museum and aims to tell the story of Nevada. New offerings afforded by the increased space include an exhibit about the first dinosaur fossils found in Southern Nevada. The Springs Preserve is open daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and the Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas is open Friday through Monday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. nevadaculture.org, springspreserve.org, 702-822-7700

On a related note, researchers from the Springs Preserve, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and various other educational institutions and federal agencies recently found that the Vegas Valley Leopard Frog (see artist's rendering at right), thought extinct since 1942, is actually not extinct and is genetically identical to a species found around Arizona's Mogollon Rim, about 250 miles southeast of Las Vegas.





◆ MGM Resorts International recently opened the first personal **electric vehicle charging station** on the Las Vegas Strip. Located at the valet entrance to The Shoppes at Mandalay Place, the charging station is free to retail and resort customers with electric vehicles such as the Nissan LEAF and Chevy Volt. mandalaybay.com

◆ Madeleine Pickens' northeastern Nevada **Mustang Monument** welcomed 200 additional horses earlier this year, bringing the wild horse preserve's population to about 700 animals. Through cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management, Pickens hopes to eventually house thousands more horses on the ranch. savingamericasmustangs.org

◆ Several streams in Elko, Lander, and Nye Counties are being utilized to produce **hydroelectric power** for the state. Thanks to low-interest loans from the Nevada State Office of Energy, power plants on the North and South Twin Rivers and Kingston, Mill, Van Norman Burns, and Schmidt Creeks are projected to produce more than 2.5 million kilowatt hours of electricity per year. energy.state.nv.us, 775-687-1850

◆ An Energy Efficiency Community Block Grant from the Nevada State Office of Energy has allowed the historic **Caliente Depot and Lincoln County Courthouse** in Pioche to receive new heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning systems. The new systems will decrease energy expenses drastically and greatly improve working conditions in the depot, which houses the Caliente city hall and administrative offices and a library, among other offices and businesses, and the courthouse, which includes county offices and a detention center. energy.state.nv.us, 775-687-1850

LODGING

Off the Grid in Nevada's Outback



The former Horse-N-Fly Ranch in Monitor Valley recently changed its name to The Brass Ring Ranch. Fortunately everything else the central Nevada guest ranch has built its reputation on—from wild horse safaris and limitless opportunities for adventure to rural relaxation and western hospitality—remains. Hosts Jerry and Rebecca Elkins specialize in western vacations that are individually tailored to the tastes of their clients. Activities include basic horsemanship instruction, hiking, climbing, chuck wagon campfires, site seeing and exploring, wildlife viewing, and stargazing, and accommodations run the gamut from an authentic tepee to a renovated 1863 miner's cabin. brassringranch.net, 775-761-7777

ADVENTURE

Shoshone Off-Highway Vehicle Trail System Opens

Nevada's first professionally designed trail system for ATVs and OHVs opened earlier this year in Lander County's Shoshone Range, east of State Route 305 between Austin and Battle Mountain. The Shoshone OHV Trail System features about 60 miles of established, signed, and mapped trails that navigate a variety of high-desert landscapes. The Redrock Trailhead, which accesses the Shoshone Trail System, features trailer parking, primitive camping, a vault toilet, and beginner and warm-up loop trails. The Mill Creek Recreation Site, about six miles north of the trailhead, offers more comfort at its developed campground. Trail users can also camp in the backcountry along the Shoshone Trail System. battlemountaintourism.com, 775-635-1112



EVENT

Bike the Las Vegas Strip

As a general rule, cyclists who value their sanity and well-being avoid riding the Las Vegas Strip, but on Saturday, October 15, cyclists can safely enjoy the sights of Las Vegas Boulevard with a police escort during the fourth annual Viva Bike Vegas, hosted by the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada. The event includes three routes: a 103-mile "century ride" and 60-mile ride that both include the Red Rock Canyon scenic loop and a 17-mile ride within the city. All the routes include the Strip. The cost for each ride is \$125 until September 25 and \$150 September 26 through October 9. vivabikevegas.com, 702-676-1542

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FIDO-FRIENDLY

Nevada is Going to the Dogs

Despite being man's best friend, our canine companions are routinely shunned from restaurants and hotels and relegated to small fenced-off corners of parks. Luckily, a handful of Nevada entities are making pups a priority and welcoming dogs with tail-wagging enthusiasm.

Henderson's nine-acre Heritage Bark Park is the largest dog park in the Las Vegas Valley. The Bark Park includes multiple runs for dogs of varying sizes and temperaments, an agility course, walking trails, dog bone-themed benches, and pet-friendly drinking fountains. Barkules, a six-foot-tall, 18-foot-long statue of a puppy, watches over the park and provides a play area for children.

cityofhenderson.com, 702-267-2323

Yappy Hour, from 5 to 8 p.m. on alternating Thursdays at Rumor Boutique Hotel in Las Vegas, invites Las Vegans to bring their four-legged friends for socializing, drink specials, and "Yappitizers" for people and their pets in the resort's grassy courtyard. The pet-inspired happy hour includes dog-related product displays and a dog massage therapist. rumorhotel.com, 877-997-8667

A growing list of Nevada hotels have gone pet-friendly with promotions such as Caesars Entertainment Las Vegas Resorts' PetStay program, which includes treats, food and water dishes, pet mats, maps of dog-walking routes, and on-site relief areas at eight resorts on the Strip. petstaylasvegas.com, 800-427-7247

The Sparks Marina Dog Park (cityofsparks.us, 775-353-2350) is the only place along the manmade 77-acre lake where dogs are permitted in the water. After Rex takes a dip he can leash up for the short walk to Scraps Dog Bakery on the other side of the marina for treats and toys. myfavoritescraps.com, 775-358-9663

Wild River Grille, on the ground floor of the Riverside Artist Lofts in downtown Reno, invites guests to feast *al fresco* with Fido every Monday during Dinner with Your Dog on the restaurant's patio overlooking the Truckee River. wildrivergrille.com, 775-284-7455



**DEATH VALLEY
NATIONAL PARK**
ON THE NEVADA-CALIFORNIA BORDER
**IS ONE OF THE DRIEST
PLACES ON EARTH.**
HOW DRY?
ANNUAL RAINFALL
IN THE PARK AVERAGES
LESS THAN TWO INCHES,
AND FOR A 40-MONTH PERIOD
IN THE EARLY 1930s,
ONLY 0.64 INCHES
OF RAIN FELL!

EVENT

Tractors & Truffles Returns to Fallon

Back for another round following its successful debut in 2010, Tractors & Truffles celebrates the agriculture, fine arts, and fine foods of Fallon and the Lahontan Valley. The October 15 event includes a luncheon and tour at the family-owned Lattin Farms; a tour and tasting at the home of the only Nevada-grown, -aged, and -bottled wine, Churchill Vineyards; a gourmet, four-course farm-to-table dinner prepared by acclaimed chef and former Food Network host, John Ash; Fallon's own culinary Chopin, Steve Hernandez of The Slanted Porch; and Le Cordon Bleu chef and ice sculptor Mark Davis. The event concludes with a performance by folk singer and song writer Susan Werner at the Oats Park Art Center's Barkley Theater. Tickets are \$125 for the entire event and \$100 for the dinner and show only. tractorsandtruffles.com, 775-423-4556

ENTERTAINMENT

Wayniacs Can Rejoice in the Public Opening of Shenandoah

The 42-acre Casa de Shenandoah ranch—home of Mr. Las Vegas himself, Wayne Newton—is set to open to the public later this year. For the first time ever, fans can have a look into the mansion and surrounding grounds of the entertainment icon. Highlights include Newton's prize Arabian horses, wildlife including wallabies and penguins, and a new museum that features rare collectibles from his more than five decades on the stage.

Earlier this year, Newton was knighted into the American Delegation of the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of Saint George, an organization that supports philanthropic activities. Film footage of the knighting ceremony will be included in a documentary that is set to be part of the Shenandoah tour. waynenewton.com



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34TH ANNUAL

Great Nevada Picture Hunt 2011

Following the theme of our 75th-anniversary year—Nevada’s territories—our 2011 photo contest is a celebration of the best images from the state’s six tourism territories: Las Vegas Territory, Pony Express Territory, Cowboy Country, Indian Territory, Nevada Silver Trails, and Reno-Tahoe Territory.

Because we’re covering each territory in that order on an issue-to-issue basis in 2011, we ordered the photo contest categories accordingly. Also new this year is a “Then & Now” category, in which photographers were asked to re-create former *Nevada Highways and Parks* or *Nevada Magazine* cover images.

From vivid wildlife and black-and-white nostalgia to scenic byways and Nevada waterways, this year’s winners and runners-up illustrate beautifully the Nevada we all know and love... to photograph.

GREAT NEVADA PICTURE HUNT

By the Numbers

Total Participants: 194

Total Images Judged: 737

Total Winners: 8

Results: Priceless

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GRAND PRIZE

THOMAS McEWAN

Hometown: Las Vegas

Title: “Night Sky Over Ward Charcoal Ovens”

Location: Ward Charcoal Ovens State Historic Park

As if McEwan didn’t do a superb enough job capturing this moment on his Canon 5D MKII, he does a fine job of it in words as well. “At Ward Charcoal Ovens State Park, there are no streetlights, no car lights, and no ‘light domes’ from distant cities,” he says. “You would think it would be jet black at night, but the starlight was so bright, I was able to work without a flashlight.”

the winners



From Death Valley National Park to Great Basin National Park, rural Nevada is renowned for its starry skies, and the charcoal ovens—south of Ely—afford the type of remarkable stargazing opportunities that set the Silver State apart.

McEwan describes it best:

When I arrived on the scene after dark, a thin sliver of a moon had just ducked behind a nearby mountain on the right but still illuminated a distant mountain on the left. I positioned my camera in front of the rightmost kiln and panned it to produce a panorama of six individual photos that I later stitched together. With the Milky Way looking like a spewing

volcano, I was stunned by its immense size. We are living in a whopper of a galaxy!

As a tribute to just how dark and clear the Nevada skies can be, what look like earthly clouds between the two rightmost kilns are actually galactic dust clouds many billions of miles away.

McEwan used a 75-second exposure per frame. In addition to the six well-intact charcoal ovens—built by miners in the 1870s to make charcoal for smelting—the park also offers recreation trails and 14-site Willow Creek Campground. parks.nv.gov/www.htm, 775-289-1693

LAS VEGAS TERRITORY

WINNER

KURT KUZNICKI

Hometown: Reno

Title: "Joshua Trees"

Location: Southern Nevada (generally)

Given their name by Mormon settlers, Joshua trees reminded the emigrants of a Biblical story in which Joshua reaches his hands up to the sky in prayer. Photographing them—as evidenced by Kuznicki's mastery of the fish-eye lens—can also yield heavenly results.

Joshuas are synonymous with the Mojave Desert, but their range goes beyond that. Nevada travelers on U.S. 95 south of Tonopah; U.S. 93 from the Dry Lake Valley south; and the Extraterrestrial Highway (State Route 375) will get plenty of chances to see the trees. Of course a visit to Las Vegas Territory's rural areas virtually guarantees a run-in with this western icon.

lvterritory.com, 702-874-1400 x.7022



RUNNER-UP

THOMAS U. KNAPP

Hometown: Las Vegas

Title: "My Turf"

Location: Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area

This iconic mammal—Nevada's state animal—was spotted along the Keystone Thrust trail, one of nearly 20 trails hikers can access at Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. "This [desert] bighorn [sheep] was grazing with another sheep and ran up a steep hillside, where they both stopped to continue feeding," Knapp says. "I was able to approach within about 50 yards of them when I took this photo."

It turns out it was a fairly lucky find for Knapp: The bighorn population is estimated to be 80 within the nearly 200,000-acre conservation area. blm.gov/nv, 702-515-5000



PONY EXPRESS TERRITORY

WINNER

ROBERT ROLLINS

Hometown: Reno

Title: "Fort Churchill"

Location: Fort Churchill State Historic Park

Fort Churchill State Historic Park remains one of central Nevada's most photographed attractions for the site's original, decaying adobe buildings that can keep a lover of the lens busy for days.

What sets Rollins' photo apart from the rest, however, are two tried-and-true camera strategies. For one, you still have to get to your destination early to take advantage of good ambient light, and two, film is still valued by veteran shooters such as Rollins. "I [took] the photograph in the early morning from the west side of the park facing the Pony Express trail," he says. "I made the image with a Sinar 4x5 using Fuji transparency film." parks.nv.gov/fc.htm, 775-577-2345



RUNNER-UP

TERRY DEMPSEY

Hometown: Reno

Title: "Headlight and Bell"

Location: Nevada Northern Railway, Ely

The Nevada Northern Railway and museum—known to train buffs worldwide—preserves the Ely area's storied railroad history. That history is captured brilliantly in Dempsey's black and white, which gives visitors a good idea of the nostalgic items that await at the railroad.

Nevada Northern Railway and the chance to drive or ride a diesel- or steam-engine locomotive are big draws to Ely, and the site is so highly regarded as a photography destination that NNRy holds Winter Steam Spectacular photo shoots annually in February. nnry.com, 866-407-8326

COWBOY COUNTRY

WINNER

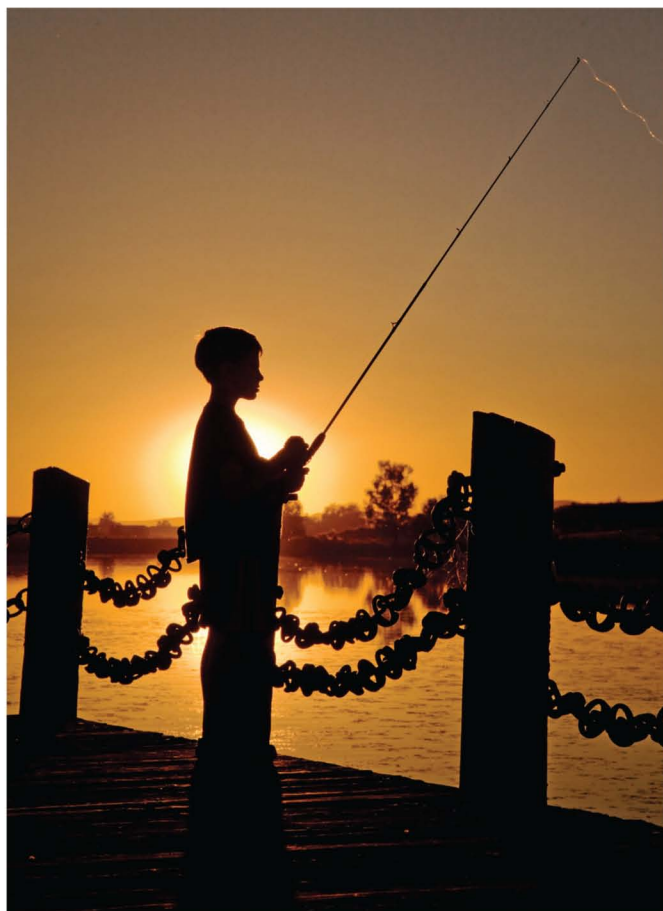
ROY O'BRIEN

Hometown: Gardnerville

Title: "Autumn Morning"

Location: Lamoille Canyon

You could call it Forest Road 660, but that wouldn't be doing the Lamoille Canyon National Scenic Byway justice. O'Brien's autumn photo of the Ruby Mountains demonstrates why the 13-mile stretch of road, and the surrounding wilderness, is so well traveled. "The photo was taken last October when my wife and I went on a fall color road trip to one of our favorite places, Lamoille Canyon," O'Brien says. "We drove up the canyon early in the morning. A storm rolled in, and the rain and dramatic sky enhanced the beauty." fs.usda.gov/htnf, 775-752-3357



RUNNER-UP

JODI ESPLIN

jodisperception.com

Hometown: Spring Creek

Title: "Summer Days"

Location: Spring Creek Marina

"Summer and fishing are just a natural fit—spending a carefree evening casting a line," says Esplin, explaining her eight-year-old son's love for fishing. "For Jayce, it is all about honing his fishing skills and catching a big one. For me, it is watching him enjoy summer, and reminiscing about a simpler time."

Spring Creek Marina is a 32-acre spring-fed lake surrounded by a park, plus the setting for fireworks on the 4th of July. springcreeknv.net, 775-753-6295



INDIAN TERRITORY

WINNER

SALLY HANRAHAN

sallyhanrahanphotography.com

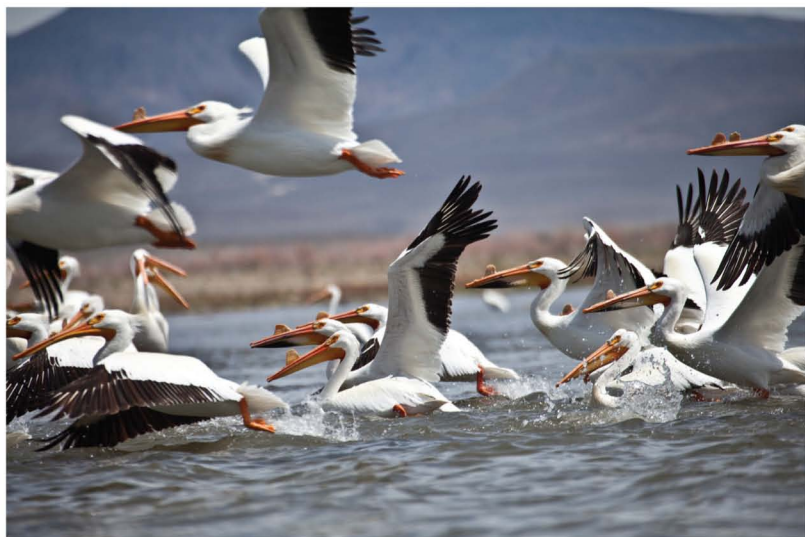
Hometown: Reno

Title: "Stone Mother Sunset"

Location: Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation

"Pyramid Lake is one of Nevada's gems," Hanrahan says, and it's difficult to argue with her, especially after seeing her sunset capture. "The [southeastern] side is my favorite, where Stone Mother watches over the south end of the lake, and the pyramid rises above the water. It is a very peaceful and spiritual place. Look for the moon setting in the upper right corner."

Unfortunately, due to vandalism, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe has cut off access to the pyramid (the inspiration for the lake's name) and Stone Mother until further notice. Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation is open to the public, but check ahead for restrictions. pyramidlake.us, 775-574-1000



RUNNER-UP

MARK HAMMON

hammonphoto.com

Hometown: Reno

Title: "White Pelicans at Pyramid Lake"

Location: Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation

The Anaho Island National Wildlife Refuge, at the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation, was established for the benefit and protection of colonial nesting species and migratory birds such as these American white pelicans. The refuge itself is closed to the public, but the majestic birds are not hard to come by during the warmer months (Hammon snapped this beauty from a kayak at the southern end of Pyramid Lake). pyramidlake.us, 775-574-1000

NEVADA SILVER TRAILS

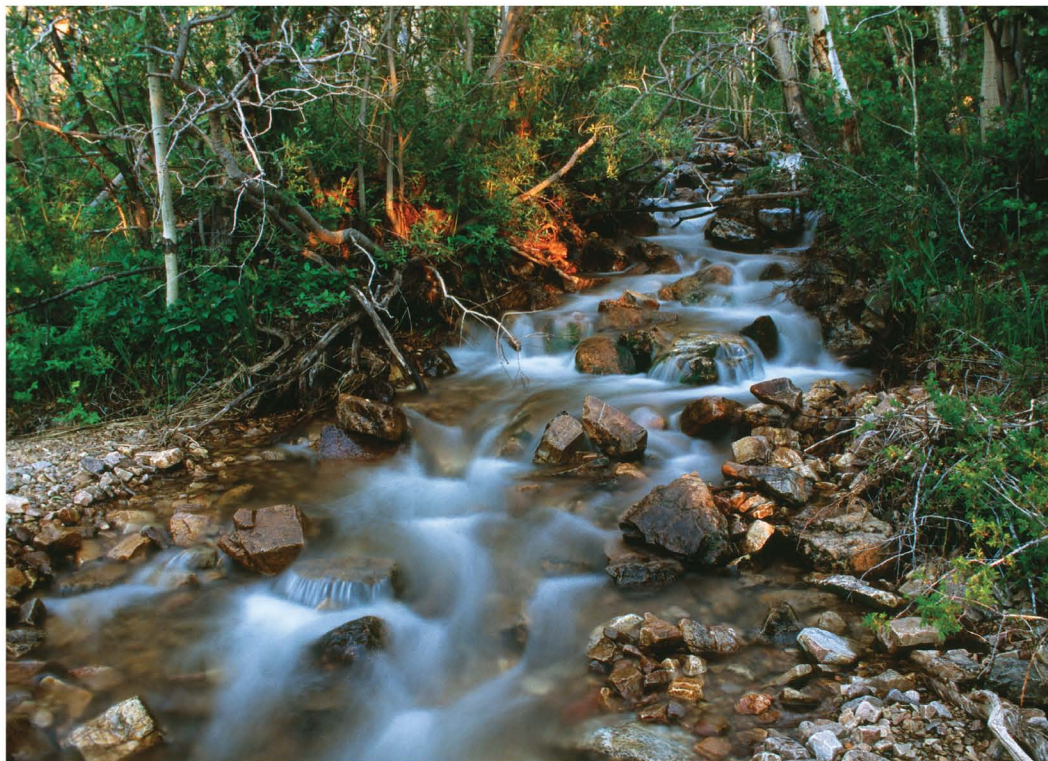
WINNER

BRIAN BEFFORT

Hometown: Reno

Title: "Wilderness Whitewater"

Location: Mount Grafton area



Few people have seen more of Nevada's beautiful, isolated wilderness than Beffort, associate director of Friends of Nevada Wilderness. Lucky for us, he totes his camera along. "I took the photo on Mill Creek in the Mount Grafton wilderness area," Beffort says. "I shot just as the sun was coming over the horizon—in that moment when the cool dawn gives way to another blazing summer day. Nevada's hidden aspen groves are among my favorite places. Here I find cool streams, birdsong, and wildlife." nevadawilderness.org, 775-324-7667



RUNNER-UP

JIM GALLI

tonopahpictures.0catch.com

Hometown: Tonopah

Title: "Mizpah Reflections"

Location: Tonopah

Galli has made a hobby of restoring old cameras and capturing these types of intriguing black-and-white snapshots. "The image was made with a Deardorff 11x14 [film size] field camera," Galli says. "The lens is a 1916-ish Wollensak Velostigmat of 405mm focus." As you can tell, this is not your average point-and-click. "I was out playing with the antique cameras when I saw the beautiful reflection of the Mizpah Hotel in the window of the Belvada building across [the street]."

Galli's timing is impeccable, as the Mizpah Hotel recently celebrated its grand re-opening in August. tonopahnevada.com, 775-482-6336; mizpahhotel.net, 855-337-3030



RENO-TAHOE TERRITORY

WINNER

SALLY HANRAHAN

sallyhanrahanphotography.com

Hometown: Reno

Title: "Second Annual
Paddle Festival"

Location: Sand Harbor
(at Lake Tahoe)

"You have to get up early for [Lake Tahoe Water Trail's Spring Paddle Day]," Hanrahan says. "Kayakers come from all over for this event. By 8 a.m., we are out on the water in three different groups: beginners, intermediates, and experienced. We got lucky and had a calm day with blue skies. It included a tour of the Thunderbird Lodge, then back to the beach for a lunch buffet and a talk on keeping Lake Tahoe blue."

The Lake Tahoe Water Trail Committee organizes several paddle events such as this and helps promote the annual Lake Tahoe Paddle Festival, held in June. laketahoewatertrail.org, 530-579-2525



RUNNER-UP

TERRI STRICKLER

Hometown: Carson City

Title: "Biggest Little Fireworks"

Location: Sparks

No other American summer holiday brings family and friends together like the 4th of July. In Strickler's case, Star-Spangled Sparks was extra special as it relates to this electrifying photo. "My wonderful brother, Pobby Heglar, gave up his holiday and spent the day with me teaching me the basics of firework photography," she says. "We set up at Sparks Marina so we could get the reflection of the fireworks on the water. I used a tripod and long exposure and got a handful of amazing photos thanks to him."

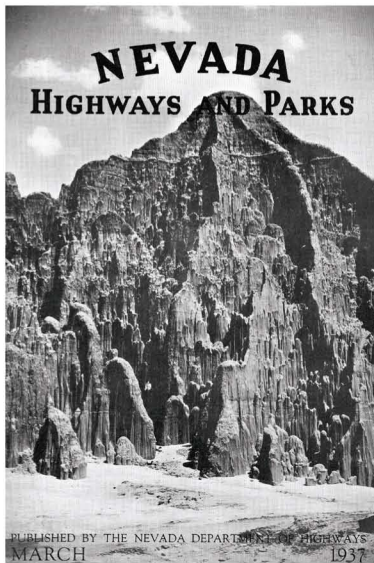
Sparks is immediately east of Reno, and blasting fireworks off the top of John Ascuaga's Nugget on July 4th is a city tradition. cityofsparks.us

THEN & NOW

1st PLACE DAWN ANDONE

Hometown: Panaca

Location: Cathedral Gorge State Park



MARCH 1937



Sometimes photographers get caught up in technical explanations, but we appreciate Andone's approach: "My reason for taking the photo—because Cathedral Gorge is magnificent!," she says. "Unfortunately it is one of Nevada's best-kept secrets. I am on a quest to change that."

Two years prior to the 1937 cover photo, Cathedral Gorge was established as a state park, along with three others in Nevada. The park is just as impressive today and is easily accessible via U.S. 93, west of Panaca.

"This photo shows how the formation has changed over almost 75 years," Andone continues. "The park offers something new every time you visit. The formations are constantly changing throughout the day as the sun moves position. Rain and storm clouds really bring out the colors in the layers." parks.nv.gov/cg.htm, 775-728-4460



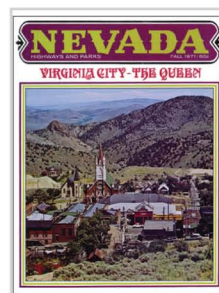
2nd PLACE BILL KOSITZKY

panoramio.com/user/136121

Hometown: Reno

Location: Virginia City

At *Nevada Magazine*, we love to hear when something found in our pages is the impetus for a Nevada adventure. To reinvent this image, it took some investigating on Kositzky's part.

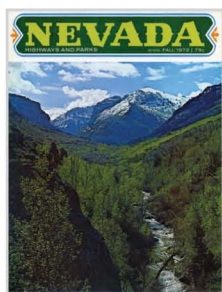


FALL 1971

"I drove to Virginia City with a copy of the [Fall 1971 *Nevada Highways and Parks*] cover on my clipboard. Driving in the higher part of the city, I stopped my car and approached a couple of residents chatting next to their

car and asked if they could tell me where the photo might have been taken from. One of the guys pointed to his house and welcomed me to drive up there and photograph from his property."

From a tripod, Kositzky took this brilliant photo 40 years later of a silver town that seems to stand still in time. virginiacity-nv.org, 800-718-7587



FALL 1972

3rd PLACE JODI ESPLIN

jodisperception.com

Hometown: Spring Creek

Location: Lamoille Canyon

Lamoille Canyon is known for fabulous photo opps, so it's no surprise the titillating terrain in northeastern Nevada has shown up a number of times on the cover of *Nevada Magazine*. "Although the season differs from the original [Fall 1972] cover photo, I liked the calico colors pairing up with this fall issue," Esplin says. "Looking at the two images had me wondering just how many people have stood in this very spot to capture the canyon's beauty." fs.usda.gov/htnf, 775-752-3357





PHOTO: CHARLIE JOHNSTON

NEVADA SILVER TRAILS

TOWNS

BY CRISTIANA CORRAO & CHARLIE JOHNSTON

*SEE MAP ON PAGES 4 & 5 FOR TOWN LOCATIONS.

Tales vary concerning the spring day in 1900 when Jim Butler and his stubborn mule supposedly stumbled upon Tonopah's silver lode. Some say that while looking for the ornery critter, Butler happened across a silver-rich outcropping (read more on page 68). Another story contests that when Butler found the mule, he picked up a rock to hurl at the ill-behaved animal and noticed the stone was heavily laden with silver. And retired Nevada State Archivist and self-proclaimed "myth buster" Guy Rocha discounts that a mule was involved at all. Whatever the case, Tonopah's birth mirrors its entire existence: unlikely, unique, and at times, a little ornery.

Such quirky stories as Butler's surround the birth and existence of many towns in Nevada Silver Trails territory, such as Pioche being so rowdy in its early days that 75 bodies were interred in the cemetery before a single person died of natural causes, and Rachel's appeal to devotees of the unexplained thanks to its position on the Extraterrestrial Highway and proximity to top-secret Area 51.

From tent cities that grew to mining metropolises overnight and faded to obscurity almost as quickly, to a bedroom community that has grown to become a tourist destination in its own right, the once-mineral-rich Silver Trails towns still hold plenty of treasures.

TONOPAH

Tonopah was home to one of the biggest mining booms in Nevada history. While several other mining towns were starting to fade away, Tonopah revived the failing mining industry in the state and was nicknamed the Queen of the Silver Camps. The silver- and gold-rich ore discovered in 1900 by Jim Butler, a part-time miner, kept the mining wave constant for two decades.

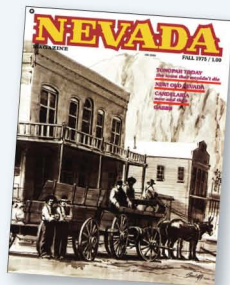
The Tonopah Historic Mining Park and museum offers a taste of what mining in the early 20th century was like—the self-guided tour covers four of the original mining camps. Visitors can walk through some of the original buildings, see exhibits, and go on an underground mine tour. The Central Nevada Museum offers a different glimpse into the history of the state with exhibits on Jim Casey, Howard Hughes, Butler, and the original inhabitants of the area, the Shoshone.

The Mizpah Hotel opened in 1907 as the first permanent structure in Tonopah and featured temperature-controlled running water and an electric elevator. After going through several owners, the Mizpah finally shut its doors in 1999. However, after a much-appreciated facelift, the Mizpah reopened at the end of August. Owners Fred and Nancy Cline have been restoring the old hotel to its former glory since early 2011 and promise to keep the integrity of its history intact. “The early pioneer spirit abounds in Tonopah, and the Mizpah is one of the few authentic places left which embodies that spirit,” Nancy Cline says. “[The restoration of the Mizpah] is a project which honors the perseverance and tenacity of the men and women of the early 1900s. It is a monument to their spirit.”

Perhaps the most remarkable sight to see in Tonopah is something man has had no part in creating. The area has some of the darkest night skies in the country, allowing for the beauty of the Milky Way to shine. While in most cities only 25-50 stars are visible, more than 7,000 stars can be seen in Tonopah, even with the unaided eye.—*Cristiana Corrao*

CONTACT

Town of Tonopah
102 Burro Ave., Tonopah, NV 89049
tonpahnevada.com
775-482-6336



REFLECTIONS

The once-booming silver camp in high, dry central Nevada—now showing signs of re-birth from high silver prices—takes some getting used to. If you don't mind wind, dust, and even snow in June, aren't unnerved by rattlesnakes and can live with underground rumblings from the Atomic Energy Commission's testings 40 miles away, you become enamored of the fun-loving community of 1,500 people which never quite became a ghost town.

“Tonopah: the town that wouldn't die”
Nevada Magazine, Fall 1975

ALAMO & ASH SPRINGS

The principal community in Pahrangat Valley, Alamo is the gateway to bird-watching, fishing, camping, and other outdoor recreation at Pahrangat National Wildlife Refuge. The town—named for the area's abundant poplar trees, called *alamo* in Spanish—was founded in 1901 and recently celebrated its 110th birthday in July.

Today, the town of 1,100 about 90 miles north of Las Vegas via U.S. Highway 93 is primarily a ranching community. Three gas stations/truck stops (one of which is in the nearby town of Ash Springs) receive the majority of outsider traffic through town, and a handful of restaurants and motels provide services for visitors interested in staying a while.

In addition to the wildlife refuge, Alamo's proximity to many of Lincoln County's best American Indian petroglyph and pictograph sites makes it an attractive base for excursions to see ancient rock art, and the warm Ash Springs, a few miles north of Alamo, are great for a relaxing dip. The homemade baked goods at Windmill Ridge in Alamo (which also provides lodging in a set of small cabins) are worth a visit alone.

CONTACT

Lincoln County
lincolncountynevada.com
877-870-3003

AMARGOSA VALLEY

Borax mining in the Amargosa Desert and Death Valley region led to the first settlement in Amargosa Valley around 1905. Two years later a pair of railroads were built across the valley to transport the borax and gold, silver, and lead from nearby mining districts around present-day Beatty. The railroads' utility dwindled along with mine output, and by the early 1940s the long-abandoned rails were salvaged for the war effort. The arrival of electricity in the 1960s heralded a period of growth that was bolstered further by the growth of Las Vegas, about 90 miles to the southeast, through the latter half of the 20th century.

Amargosa Valley's heaviest-hitting area tourist attractions include performances at Death Valley Junction's historic Amargosa Opera House, the off-highway vehicular playground of Big Dune, and the bird- and wildlife-watching destination of Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge.

CONTACT

Amargosa Valley Chamber of Commerce
821 E. Amargosa Farm Rd., Amargosa Valley, NV 89020
avnv.us
775-372-1515



PHOTO: RICHARD STEPHENS

BEATTY

The gold rush that began in the Bullfrog Hills in 1904 brought more than 2,000 claims before the stampede of miners finally slowed in 1914. With the influx of people to the area, Beatty was the most ideal location to supply water and became the railway center for the Bullfrog Mining District. Named after “Old Man” Montillus Murray Beatty, a miner who owned a ranch along the Amargosa River, it became the supply hub for Bullfrog, Gold Center, Transvaal, Rhyolite, and Springdale.

Today, Beatty is home to about 1,000 residents. Preserving the history of the town and the mining district is the Beatty Museum and Historical Society, established in 1995. Outgrowing its first two locations, the museum currently resides in a historic church. The building was recently expanded to hold its ever-increasing collection of documents and photographs and now includes a research room. The Death Valley Nut & Candy Company is the largest candy store in Nevada and offers old-fashioned candy, gummi candy, chocolate, and even homemade ice cream.

Beatty celebrates its rich history every October during Beatty Days. The three-day celebration, October 28-30, is filled with exhibits, vendors, music, competitions, historical re-enactments, and the always-entertaining Beatty Bed Races. On November 4-6, Beatty plays host to the ninth annual Death Valley Conference on History and Prehistory.

Considered one of the primary gateways to Death Valley National Park, Beatty—along with its neighbor to the south, Pahrump—is the ideal place from which to stage a visit to the largest national park in the continental United States. A little closer to town, a limestone outcropping about two miles south of town looks like nothing more than pale gray rock, but a visit to Mudmound reveals much more. Fossils of 480-million-year-old crustaceans such as barnacles, gastropods, and brachiopods can be found within the limestone.

Five miles north, Bailey’s Hot Springs offers private bathhouses for guests. A former railroad depot, Bailey’s was originally built in 1906 as a watering stop for the mining area. Neotropical birds make their home along the Amargosa River during the spring and fall migrations. The area regularly supports 21 species of birds and is a great location for birding.—CC

CONTACT

Beatty Chamber of Commerce

119 E. Main St., Beatty, NV 89003

beattynevada.org

775-553-2424

CALIENTE

In its heyday, Caliente was one of the major points on the Union Pacific Railroad line between Los Angeles and Salt Lake City. In 1923, the Caliente train depot was built to accommodate the high traffic of the railroad and serve as a maintenance facility. However, when diesel replaced steam engines in the 1950s, the stop at Caliente was no longer needed, and Las Vegas became the new maintenance site. Today the mission-style depot contains the town’s city hall, library, an art gallery, and the boxcar museum.

In the early 1870s, Caliente was briefly called Dutch Flat, but was renamed Culverwell in 1874 after William and Charles Culverwell, who bought a ranch in the area. The name changed again in 1901 to Calientes when hot springs were discovered in a cave near the base of the nearby mountains. Postal officials dropped the “s” from the name later that year. The hot springs are still in use today and are available year-round.

Union Pacific finished the railroad line, used to transport wares to mines in Pioche and Delamar, in 1905. The addition of the railroad made Caliente the most populated town in Lincoln County by 1910. Its current population is about 1,100.

The beautiful retreat at Kershaw-Ryan State Park is three miles south of town and has camping, hiking trails, a wading pool, and a picnic area. A little farther south, picturesque Rainbow Canyon is a worthy stop as well.—CC

CONTACT

Lincoln County

lincolncountynevada.com

877-870-3003



PHOTO: MATTHEW B. BROWN



Santa Fe Saloon & Motel, Goldfield

PHOTO: LARRY PROSOR

GOLDFIELD

Originally comprised of a dozen or so tents, the mining district of Goldfield was established in 1903. Within four years Goldfield had become the largest city in Nevada, boasting about 20,000 residents.

During its glory days—which lasted until 1910—Goldfield offered some of the finest amenities between Chicago and San Francisco. Goldfield’s prominence in the early 1900s was such that in 1906, the city hosted the lightweight championship boxing match between Joe Gans and Oscar “Battling” Nelson, a historic fight that lasted 42 rounds, ending with Gans winning the title following a disqualifying hit by Nelson. The Santa Fe Saloon & Motel, built in 1905, is still in business today and rents four rooms.

Also still standing today, but abandoned, is the Goldfield Hotel. Built in 1907 out of stone and brick, it has about 200 rooms, each initially equipped with a telephone. A rarity during that time, Goldfield was served by three railroads that spanned collectively from 1905 to 1940.

Goldfield’s boom was brief and, by 1910, most of the hype—and population—had dwindled. A devastating flood in 1913 preceded a fire in 1923 that destroyed a 53-block area and most of the working-class neighborhoods—only six commercial buildings were left standing. Today, a tour of the town revives the past during visits to these historic buildings.

The current population is about 300.—CC

CONTACT

Goldfield Chamber of Commerce
115 Columbia Ave., Goldfield, NV 89013
goldfieldnevada.org
775-485-3560

WORTH A CLICK

Goldfield Historical Society
goldfieldhistoricalsociety.com

HAWTHORNE

Though it’s known as a military town, Hawthorne began as a railroad depot for the Carson and Colorado Railway in 1881. While it had a brief foray into mining, as many towns in Nevada have, Hawthorne survived several unstable periods before finally being established as the Naval Ammunition Depot in 1930. Known today as the Hawthorne Army Depot, its main function is as an ammunition center—the largest in the world.

The Hawthorne Ordnance Museum has on display a variety of ammunition that dates to the early 20th century, along with vintage photographs and military uniforms. The USO building, opened in 1942 as a WWII military personnel facility, is still open and used as a community center. The town’s annual Armed Forces Day Celebration in May honors its military past and present.

About 10 miles northwest of Hawthorne is Walker Lake, a remnant of the Pleistocene epoch Lake Lahontan and an ideal location for boating, fishing, and swimming. Only two native fish remain in the increasingly saline water, the tui chub and Lahontan Cutthroat Trout.—CC

CONTACT

Mineral County Chamber of Commerce
822 5th St., Hawthorne, NV 89415
mineralcountychamber.com
775-945-2507



Mina

PHOTO: CHARLIE JOHNSTON

LUNING & MINA

Known to most as the two places on U.S. Highway 95 between Hawthorne and Tonopah where the speed limit drops precipitously—and aggravatingly—low, Luning and Mina share more than a highway and respective speed traps.

Just eight miles apart, the towns were founded following the discovery of gold and copper in nearby hillsides. Mina, the larger of the two then and now (a couple hundred residents compared to fewer than 100 people in Luning, today), was an important railroad junction for nearby mining towns including Candelaria. When the mines' utility faded, the towns' demises followed.

Today, few services are available in either town. Mina's Desert Lobster Café is an attention-grabber and worth a stop. The boat-turned-restaurant (pictured above) is hard to miss and serves up hearty burgers and fish 'n' chips. A seasonal, walk-up burger stand offers an alternative choice to the Desert Lobster. The Sunrise Valley RV Park, also in Mina, offers full hookups, tent camping, hiking trails, and WiFi.

Luning's rock and souvenir shop is worth browsing through, and the town's single café is said to serve stellar burgers and malts. The two towns also combine for a spattering of small-town watering holes.

CONTACT

Nevada Silver Trails
nevadasilvertrails.com

PAHRUMP

The Shoshone originally inhabited the valley they called *Pah Rimpi*, meaning "water rock" because of its many flowing artesian wells. The settlers who came toward the end of the 19th century derived the name Pahrump from the indigenous name.

With its wide array of activities, recreational as well as things to do in town, Pahrump can accommodate a variety of visitors. The Pahrump Valley Museum carries on the legacy of the Old West with exhibits of farming and mining equipment, Native American

and cowboy artifacts, historical documents, and an impressive collection of Abraham Lincoln memorabilia. Since its founding in 1991, the museum has also acquired several historic buildings, including a house constructed entirely of railroad ties and the former schoolhouse.

Pahrump Valley Winery and the new Sanders Family Winery offer wine tastings and tours. The former hosts an annual Grape Stomp, October 8-9, and is home to Symphony's Restaurant, one of the area's best fine-dining establishments. If wine doesn't pack

quite the punch you're after, Pahrump Valley Roasters is Southern Nevada's largest coffee roaster and recently expanded to include a café at 921 State Route 160, Suite 402 in Pahrump.

For adrenaline junkies, there are the nearby Pahrump Valley Speedway and the Spring Mountain Motor Resort and Country Club. Mountain trails and two area golf courses are musts for outdoor enthusiasts.

The city's proximity to Death Valley National Park makes it an ideal entry point and place to gather supplies for a trip into the park. Tecopa Hot Springs Resort in California, about 40 miles from Pahrump, offers hot mineral baths and other health- and wellness-oriented attractions in a peaceful desert setting.

Pahrump also hosts several annual events throughout the year, such as the Pahrump Fair and Festival, September 29-October 2; Wild West Extravaganza, October 14-16; and Pahrump Powwow, November 18-20.—CC

CONTACT

Town of Pahrump
400 State Route 160, Pahrump, NV 89060
pahrumnpnv.org
775-727-5107

REFLECTIONS

As much as it is a nice place to live and retire, it's also become a great Nevada getaway. Pahrump is one of the state's more RV-friendly destinations. It boasts six major RV resorts and makes a great base camp for adventures at nearby Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area and Mount Charleston. The area offers [two] golf courses, one of which (Furnace Creek) is at 214 feet below sea level.



"Tour Around Nevada: Pahrump"
Nevada Magazine, September/October 2009

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PANACA

Panaca, a Mormon settlement born in 1864, is the oldest surviving town in eastern Nevada. Dubbed *Pan Nuk Ker* by Southern Paiutes, Panaca was founded after Mormon missionary William Hamblin staked the Panacker mining claim. This farming community survived its early years by selling produce to miners in nearby towns, primarily Pioche. The 19th-century architecture remains largely unchanged, making a trip here a true step into Nevada's past.

Stemming from its Mormon roots, Panaca is the only town in Nevada that doesn't allow the sale of alcohol and, along with Boulder City, forbids gaming.

Two miles northwest of Panaca is Cathedral Gorge State Park. The water-carved ravine is framed by unique cathedral-like spires that were created by erosion from rainwater on the soft clay. Miller Point, near the northern entrance, offers a breathtaking overlook of the canyon.—CC

CONTACT

Lincoln County
lincolncountynevada.com
877-870-3003

PIOCHE

It's alleged that 75 murdered men were buried at Boot Hill cemetery before anyone died of natural causes in Pioche. It was considered the roughest mining town of the 1800s, where henchmen were hired to guard mining claims and guns were

considered the lone rule.

Silver deposits were discovered in the area in 1864, and, four years later, San Francisco financier Francois L.A. Pioche purchased the initial claim. The ensuing mining camp was named Pioche's City and later just Pioche.

The million-dollar courthouse is a must-see for any visitors to the town. After Pioche

took the county seat from Hiko in 1871, plans to build a courthouse were started. The beginning cost for the construction was \$26,400. However, due to negligence and refinancing, by the time the final payment was made in 1937, the cost had risen to nearly \$1 million. Restored in the 1970s, it has become a living history museum with each room in the spirit of its original function. Formal tours are available daily from May through September. The town's other museum, the Lincoln County Museum, holds many important artifacts from Pioche's past and is home to an impressive black light mineral display.

Other enticing activities include hiking in five nearby state parks, fishing, golfing, and off-road driving. The Labor Day celebration held annually draws people from around the state and beyond. Tournaments, parades, and other activities take place during the four-day celebration, September 2-5.—CC

CONTACT

Pioche Chamber of Commerce
752 Main St., Pioche, NV 89043
piochenevada.com
775-962-5544

REFLECTIONS

[Pioche's] best-known landmark is the Million Dollar Courthouse, a block north of Main Street. Construction of the two-story brick courthouse was bid out at \$26,400 in 1871 but cost \$88,000 by the time it was completed the next year. Refinancing by corrupt officials multiplied the debt over the years until by 1937 the cost to Lincoln County taxpayers reached nearly a million dollars.



"Living Ghost Towns"
Nevada Magazine, April 1983

RACHEL

The first mention of UFOs in Rachel was in 1989. Bob Lazar claimed he worked with scientists to reverse engineer the propulsion system on alien spacecrafts. His claims were never validated, but the extraterrestrial whirlwind in southeastern Nevada was officially ignited. Originally called Tempiute Village because of the Paiute Indians who used to reside there, and then Sand Springs when it was a tungsten mining town, the town settled on Rachel in 1977, named for the first baby born in the newly named town. The extraterrestrial frenzy began after the mine closed in 1988.

Located north of the Nevada Test Site along the Extraterrestrial



PHOTO: CHARLIE JOHNSTON



PHOTO: CHARLIE JOHNSTON

Highway—State Route 375 adopted the mysterious moniker in 1996—Rachel has been something of a celebrity since the 1989 news was leaked to a Las Vegas television station. Since then, the town has been frequented by UFO enthusiasts from around the world. Much of the hype is due to the activity and secrecy surrounding Area 51, a top-secret military test and development facility near the test site at Groom Lake. Geocaching is another popular draw to Rachel, and more than 100 caches in the region make the town a “power-caching” site.

The only business in Rachel is the Little A’Le’Inn Restaurant and Bar. Open for more than 20 years, it offers the famous Alien Burger and alien-themed gift shop. The restaurant hosts several events throughout the year including holiday dinners, Rachel Day every May, August’s Extraterrestrial Midnight Marathon, and alien search parties.—CC

CONTACT

Lincoln County
lincolncountynevada.com
877-870-3003

WORTH A VISIT

Little A’Le’Inn
HC 61 Box 45, Rachel, NV 89001
littlealeinn.com
775-729-2515

SMITH VALLEY & WELLINGTON

The neighboring farming and ranching communities of Smith Valley and Wellington combine as one of the state’s most productive and important agricultural regions. Following the 1860 mining boom in Aurora, a bridge over the Walker River and a stagecoach station were established at the site of Wellington (the name “Wellington’s” came about in 1863). The station eventually became a trading post, general store, and post office for the region’s growing number of farms and ranches. Today, about 2,500 people live in Smith Valley and Wellington.



PHOTO: MATTHEW B. BROWN

While nearby Yerington is the easiest place in the region to find services and a hotel room, Wellington does boast a handful of shops and eateries, including Wellington Mercantile and Sweet Country Café, which has, according to Yerington's Debbie Arrighi, "the best homemade lemon meringue pies in the universe."

Smith Valley's Walker River Resort offers RV hookups, bed and breakfast-style lodging, and myriad outdoor activities. Wellington's original one-room schoolhouse, dating to 1898, still stands as the Wellington Station Resort Museum and makes for an informative history-laden stop. Fishing and camping along the Walker River and nearby Wilson Canyon are favorite local outdoor activities. Turkey hunting is also popular.

WORTH A VISIT

Walker River Resort

700 Hudson Way, Smith Valley, NV 89430

wrrsort.com

800-446-2573

YERINGTON

A small trading post and saloon were all that made up the area of Pizen Switch—a reference to the whiskey sold in the bar—in the 1870s. As the town grew, it seemed to the few residents that a town named for alcohol was unrespectable,

and the name was changed to Greenfield—all the while, the mailing address was Mason Valley.

It is said that the name was finally changed to Yerington in 1894 as a way to flatter Henry Marvin Yerington, the man who could get the town included on the railroad route. The railroad never came, but the town prospered despite it. Today, about 3,000 people call Yerington home. "You have [attractions like] the Loneliest Highway, but to get to Yerington people have to turn off the road," long-time resident Arrighi says. "But when you get here, it's quite a treasure."

The Lyon County Museum showcases artifacts from the town's early days. The collections are held in seven different buildings including three old schoolhouses and a replica general store and blacksmith shop.

Grammar School No. 9 in Yerington was restored and converted into the Jeanne Dini Cultural Center in 1998. The theater within the center holds productions year-round. Photographs and art are hung in the Café at the Center. The Yerington Theatre for the Arts operates the center and presents different forms of art, educational programs, and cultural events.—CC

CONTACT

City of Yerington

102 S. Main St., Yerington, NV 89447

yerington.net

775-463-3511



Yerington Post Office

PHOTO: PAT FIETTA

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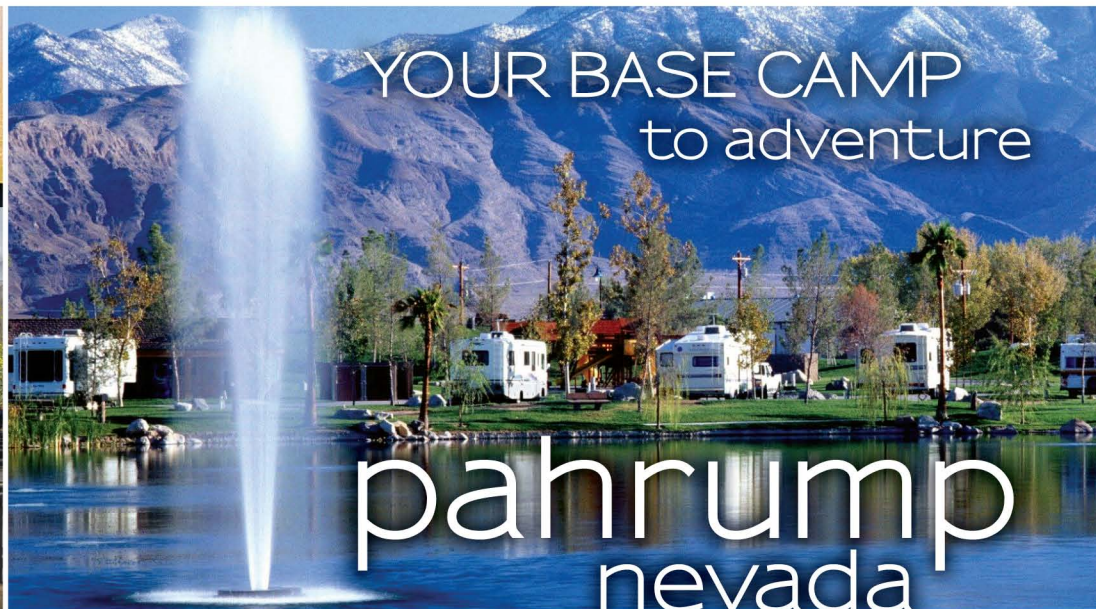
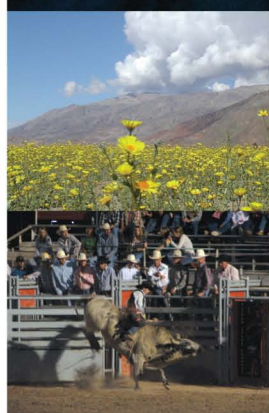
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PHOTO: MATTHEW B. BROWN

JEANNE DINI CULTURAL CENTER

Yerington's grammar school turned house of the arts binds this Mason Valley community.

BY MATTHEW B. BROWN

If you want a taste—literally—of the Dini legacy in Yerington, make reservations at the Jeanne Dini Cultural Center on Friday, September 9.

As a kickoff to the Taste of the Valley Art & Blues Festival, the next day, guests can indulge in a special Ravioli Night in honor of the late Jeanne Dini. “It ties to the Italian heritage in our valley and to our guardian angel who watches over us,” says Debbie Arrighi, executive director of the Yerington Theatre for the Arts. “She’s gone now, but this is her baby.”

Jeanne Dini died in 1994, but before that she was instrumental in restoring the building that now bears her name in golden letters. In the early 1980s, Dini, her husband, Joe, and others in the community couldn’t accept the disheveled condi-

tion of the former Yerington Grammar School No. 9 that had been boarded up since 1978. Joe Dini himself attended the school, which opened in 1912.

As Speaker of the Assembly, Joe used his political influence to find funding for the restoration project, which officially got off the ground in 1988. After a decade of fundraising and legislation spearheaded by the Dinis, the Jeanne Dini Cultural Center opened its doors in January 1998.

Also known as the Yerington Theatre for the Arts, the building is home to a diverse mix of performing, literary, and visual arts—on par with such rural Nevada cultural coliseums as Fallon’s Oats Park Art Center and the Eureka Opera House. “What people will find in this center are international and world-class quality performances in a very small community with your neighbors sitting next to you,”

Arrighi says. “If you come to one of the performances here, you’re going to have a really intimate show.”

Not only does the community look forward to attending touring concerts and plays in the 150-seat theater, many have performed on the center’s stage, including Jeanne and Joe’s son, Jay. “To preserve something like this is a great thing,” Jay says. “My children and grandchildren watch plays here.”

In addition to the stage and theater, the center contains two art galleries—one upstairs and another connected to the downstairs Café at the Center, a quaint breakfast and lunch spot serving such delicacies as the Jeanne Club and Aileen’s Special Baklava. Through September 30, Lobby Gallery goers can enjoy a Photo Retrospective, and from October 3 to November 18, Native American craftsmanship will be

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

Yerington Grammar School No. 9 will celebrate its centennial in 2012. Yerington Theatre for the Arts is searching for alumni and will be conducting a Friends of YGS No. 9 membership drive.

on display in the Landing Gallery.

What has kept the center going strong for nearly 15 years are its annual events, starting with September's Taste of the Valley Art & Blues Festival. "One of the unique things about Taste of the Valley is the local farmers and ranchers come in—the garlic farmers and onion farmers—and they'll have a booth that'll feature their products," Jay says.

"Last year Snyder Livestock [Company] did caramelized onion toppings with cheesecake," Arrighi adds. "It was delicious! People really went for it." In addition to delectable local foods, there are numerous art vendors mixed with a great lineup of live blues bands.

In December, the center hosts *Las Posadas*, a Hispanic celebration of the holidays featuring a dazzling candlelight procession and traditional caroling. January features On the Trail to Elko, on the heels—or spurs—of the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in the northeastern Nevada city of the same name. The Yerington gathering is highlighted by a western silent auction and live music.

May is about celebrating the community, as the center puts on Notes to Our Children, a gathering of Yerington elders across all cultures. The longtime residents offer advice to coming generations and tell stories about their youth: "I used to ride my horse to school, and the horse knew the way home," says Arrighi, echoing the sort of memory that might be overheard at Notes to Our Children. "A lot of communities don't have that because people have moved on."

If you happen to go downtown, you'll see another testament to the Dini legacy in Dini's Lucky Club, the oldest continuous family-owned casino in Nevada, according to Jay. His grandfather, Giuseppe, opened the establishment in 1933. Joe Dini, 82, can still be seen almost daily at Dini's, where he comes in to check in on his sons, George and Jay, now the third generation to own Dini's Lucky Club.

It's only fitting, then, that one of Nevada's most influential couples has their names on two buildings, reminding residents and visitors of their important contributions to the town of Yerington. ▀

CONTACT

**Yerington Theatre for the Arts
at Jeanne Dini Cultural Center**
120 N. California St., Yerington
yeringtonarts.com
775-463-1783

Café at the Center:
Open Tues. to Fri., 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jeanne Dini Ravioli Night,
Sept. 9
Taste of the Valley Art & Blues Festival,
Sept. 10
Third Thursdays at The Center Gallery,
Sept. 15 & Oct. 20
Bottom Line Duo,
Oct. 7
Colin Ross & Mig O'Hara Unplugged,
Nov. 4

Bottom left: Red Chamber performs at the Yerington Theatre for the Arts. Café at the Center and the Lobby Gallery (bottom right) occupy the lower level of the Jeanne Dini Cultural Center.

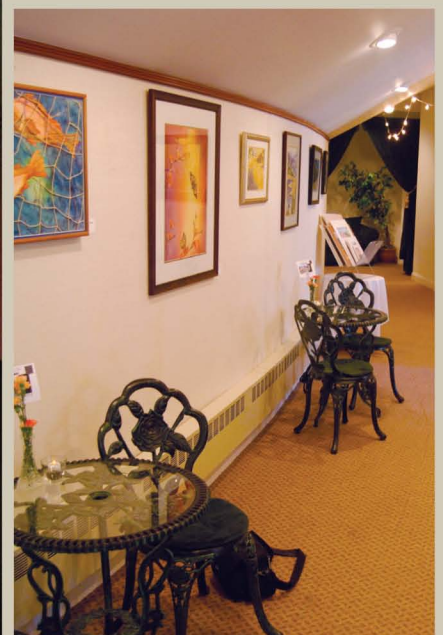


PHOTO: MATTHEW B. BROWN

parks and recreation

Fourteen diverse, scenic places to take the family in Nevada Silver Trails territory.

BY CHARLIE JOHNSTON

Nevada's largest territory, the vast south-central swath of land known as Silver Trails, is a symphony in isolated grandeur. From the flood-carved walls of Cathedral Gorge State Park and the daunting expanses of parched Death Valley National Park to picturesque wetlands in Pahrnagat National Wildlife Refuge and the ruins of a once-mighty silver industry at Belmont Courthouse State Historic Park, the region is home to some of Nevada's most intriguing locales.

*SEE MAP ON PAGES 4 & 5 FOR SPECIFIC AND GENERAL LOCATIONS.
NOTE: DESERT NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE WAS COVERED IN THE
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2011 ISSUE.



PHOTOS: CHARLIE JOHNSTON (ABOVE), RACHID DAHNOUN (OPPOSITE PAGE)

At 282 feet below sea level, Death Valley National Park's Badwater Basin (above) is the lowest point in North America. Opposite page: Racetrack Valley gets its name from the peculiar-moving rocks whose tracks crisscross its surface. When the typically dry lakebed is moist with dew or rainwater, it becomes very slick, allowing the valley's notoriously high winds to push the stones across it.

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

Despite the somewhat unflattering picture painted by its ominous name, Death Valley National Park offers visitors unrivaled beauty and countless adventures around every corner. The largest national park outside of Alaska at almost 5,300 square miles (nearly the size of Connecticut), Death Valley sits mostly within California—the northeastern corner is in Nevada. But with primary entry points at Beatty and Pahrump, and flora, fauna, geography, and history that are distinctly of the Great Basin, Death Valley is a welcome extension of the Silver State.

Home to such superlatives as the Western Hemisphere's highest-recorded temperature (134 degrees Fahrenheit at Furnace Creek on July 10, 1934) and North America's lowest point (282 feet below sea





PHOTO: CHARLIE JOHNSTON

A powerful volcanic steam eruption about 300 years ago created Ubehebe Crater (above) in the northern part of present-day Death Valley National Park.

level at Badwater Basin), Death Valley is uniquely suited to create lasting memories for anyone prepared to discover its wonders. In addition to these favorite sites, the park is brimming with fascinating destinations.

Breathtaking gorges such as Golden Canyon, Mosaic Canyon, Titus Canyon, and Twenty Mule Team Canyon offer precious shade in otherworldly settings (and you don't even have to get out of your car at Titus Canyon), and scenic stops such as the multi-hued volcanic and sedimentary hills of Artist's Drive and Zabriskie Point are kaleidoscopic masterpieces of color.

Natural phenomena such as the jagged rock and salt spires of Devil's Golf Course (not an actual golf course), the mysterious moving rocks of off-the-beaten-path Racetrack Valley, and volcanic Ubehebe Crater instill a child-like wonderment in even

CONTACT

**Death Valley
National Park**
PO Box 579, Death
Valley, CA 92328
nps.gov/deva
760-786-3200

REFLECTIONS

There are only two maintained trails in the park, but don't let that stop you. Some of the best hiking is off trail, where you can easily follow canyon bottoms, wander over salt flats, or climb sand dunes. The canyon hikes are short, so relaxed hikers can be finished in a few hours, and the more adventurous can pick a hike in the morning and still have time for another in the afternoon.



"Desert Mosaic"

Nevada Magazine, September/October 2009

the most seasoned explorers. Patient, physically fit hikers will enjoy climbing some of North America's highest sand dunes—the remote 700-foot-high Eureka Dunes—and hikers with less time at their disposal can scale the Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes near Stovepipe Wells Village.

Despite the park's mostly parched, desert setting, some spots, such as 11,049-foot-high Telescope Peak, offer alpine adventures and abundant snow in cooler months. Darwin Falls near Panamint Springs at the park's western border is a year-round cascade in a narrow gorge amid abundant vegetation. Numerous species of pupfish in the park's and surrounding area's fragile and infrequent springs and waterways live nowhere else on earth, such as the endangered Devils Hole pupfish, found only in the tiny 6-by-16-foot Devils Hole spring (which is connected to the massive Amargosa Basin underground aquifer). Thanks to last year's installation of a new access path, removable research platform, and improved security fences, the fish can now be viewed and studied more effectively and safely.

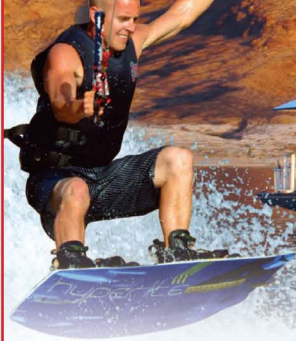
History buffs revel in Death Valley's many historical sites, from the 1876 Wildrose Charcoal Kilns and ruins of various ghost towns and Harmony and Eagle Borax Works to Scottys Castle, a '20s- and '30s-era mansion turned museum with daily tours.

If the park's blistering summertime temperatures make camping sound unbearable, air-conditioned accommodations at Furnace Creek Resort, Panamint Springs Resort, and Stovepipe Wells Village offer respite from the heat. Furnace Creek Resort is also home to the world's lowest-elevation golf course, which sits 214 feet below sea level. Nine campgrounds offer seasonal and year-round campsites, many with water, tables, fire pits, and flush toilets, and five of the nine have dump stations for RV campers.

The Furnace Creek Visitors Center is undergoing an extensive remodel, set for completion in November 2012, until which time an adjacent temporary structure will serve park visitors. Death Valley's online "virtual museum" helps potential visitors plan excursions to the park from the comfort of their homes.

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CONTACT

Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge
610 Spring Meadows Rd.,
Amargosa Valley, NV 89020
fws.gov/refuges
775-372-5435

Bird-watchers gather at Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, one of Nevada's premier bird-watching destinations, near Pahrump.

PHOTO: CYNDI SOUZA

ASH MEADOWS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Home to some of the precious few remaining desert oases in the southwest, Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge provides crucial sanctuary for more than 26 species of fish, wildlife, and plants found nowhere else on earth, 15 of which are endangered or threatened. According to the refuge's website, the 36-square-mile collection of spring-fed wetlands and alkaline desert has the greatest concentration of endemic species in the United States.

About 30 miles northwest of Pahrump via State Route 160 and Bell Vista Road, the refuge is popular for bird- and wildlife-watching, hunting, and picnicking. Swimming is permitted only at Crystal Reservoir, but exposure to the skin rash swimmer's itch keeps most people out of the water.

Information is available at the refuge entrance and headquarters near Crystal Spring, where an interpretive boardwalk trail

provides information about the refuge and its significance. The Longstreet Spring area north of the refuge headquarters is home to another boardwalk and a restored 1890s cabin once occupied by settler Andrew Jackson Longstreet.

Devils Hole, part of Death Valley National Park and administered by the National Parks Service, sits within the boundaries of the refuge and is home to the endangered Devils Hole pupfish. The springs near Point of Rocks in the eastern section of the refuge are home to Ash Meadows Amargosa pupfish, endangered like their Devils Hole cousins. The boardwalk at Point of Rocks affords good fish-viewing opportunities.

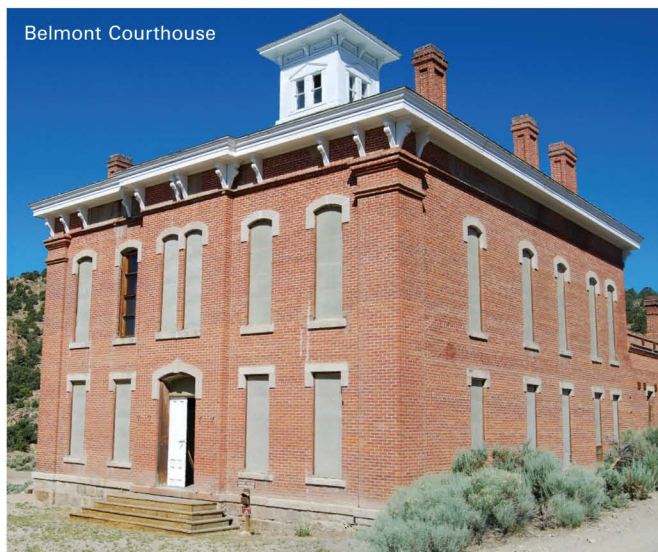
BELMONT COURTHOUSE STATE HISTORIC PARK

Tens of thousands of graffiti markings dating as far back as the late 19th century litter the interior walls of Belmont Courthouse. It is hard to escape the irony that one of the biggest taboos when it concerns historic sites—graffiti—is arguably the biggest attraction to the courthouse.

The discovery of silver in the Toquima Range north of present-day Tonopah prompted the birth of Belmont in late 1865. By 1867, the town had boomed to about 2,000 residents and was

named the seat of Nye County. An indication of the town's ill-perceived permanence, the courthouse was completed in 1876, the same year the town experienced its first substantial

decline in mineral production. Small mining booms in the 1880s were not enough to weather the storm of dwindling ore, and by the time the county seat was moved to Tonopah in 1905, Belmont's population had dwindled to nearly nothing.



Belmont Courthouse

PHOTO: MATTHEW B. BROWN

CONTACT

Belmont Courthouse State Historic Park
Southern Region Headquarters
4747 Vegas Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89108
parks.nv.gov/bc.htm
702-486-5126

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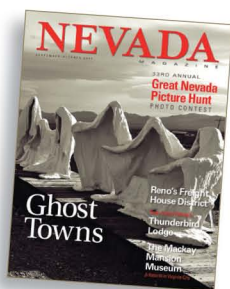
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REFLECTIONS

More than a dozen original buildings hang on in Belmont, and the pièce de résistance, the Belmont Courthouse (a State Historic Park), is worth the visit alone. Its well-preserved exterior belies the reality that it has been abandoned for more than a century. Inside, graffiti dating to the 1890s make the building truly unique among Nevada attractions. The property has hosted an unknown multitude of squatters, the most notorious of which spent a few weeks there in the summer of 1969. A doorway on the first floor bears the only concrete evidence of their visit and reads, "Charlie Manson + Family 1969," the "o" replaced with a peace symbol.



"Ghost Towns"

Nevada Magazine, September/October 2010

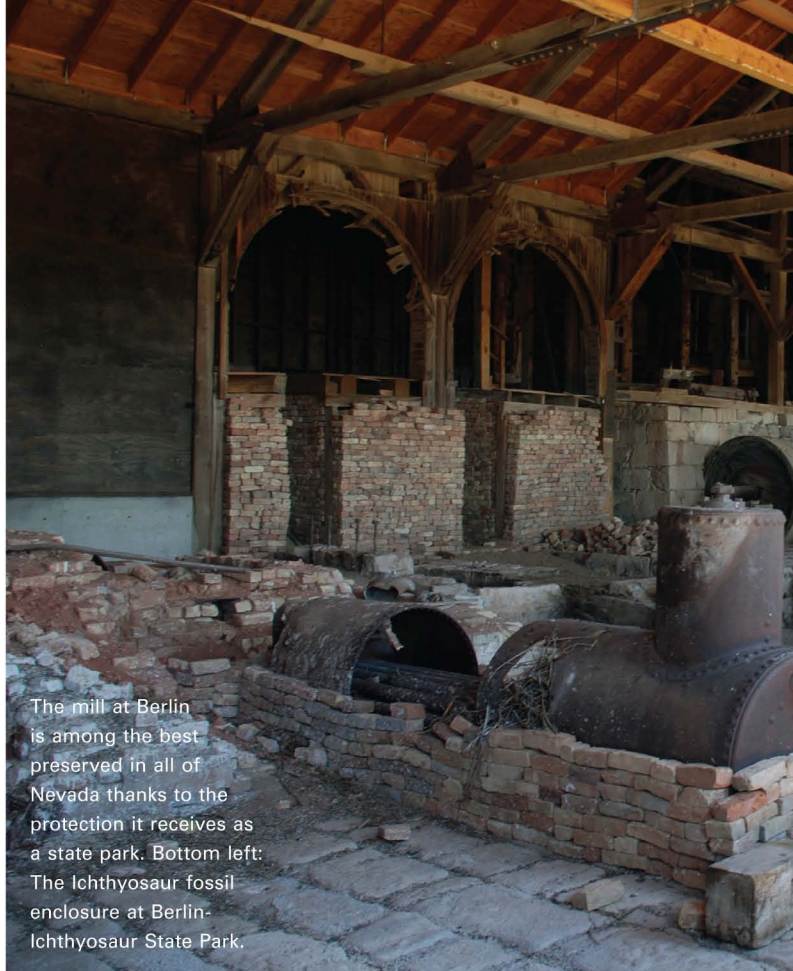
Since gaining the deed to the courthouse in 1974, the Nevada Division of State Parks has replaced its roof, stabilized it with interior bracing, sealed it from the weather, and ended its decades-long stream of impromptu occupants. Tours of the historic structure can be arranged by calling 702-486-5126. A handful of homes and sporadically open businesses hang on at Belmont amid the ruins of the former silver empire, making it a true example of a living ghost town.



CONTACT

Berlin-Ichthyosaur State Park
HC 61 Box 61200, Austin, NV 89310
parks.nv.gov/bi.htm
775-964-2440

PHOTO: GINGER deRONNEBECK



The mill at Berlin is among the best preserved in all of Nevada thanks to the protection it receives as a state park. Bottom left: The Ichthyosaur fossil enclosure at Berlin-Ichthyosaur State Park.

BERLIN-ICHTHYOSAUR STATE PARK

An Old West silver-mining empire and 55-foot-long marine reptiles may sound like the premise for a science-fiction movie, but in Nevada, it's the impetus for a popular, albeit remote, state park. Berlin-Ichthyosaur State Park, 25 miles east of Gabbs via State Routes 361 and 844 on the flanks of the Shoshone Mountains, is a marvel of Nevada history spanning millions of years.

The late-1800s and early-1900s mining town of Berlin only claimed a couple hundred residents at its peak, but despite its modest role in Nevada's mining history, today it's one of the state's best-preserved and most-visited ghost towns. The Diana Mine, slightly north of the town site, offers a glimpse into what life was like during Berlin's heyday during tours Fridays and weekends through the end of September.

A few miles southeast of Berlin and further into the mountains, the discovery of fossilized remains of Triassic-period Ichthyosaurs—technically a variation of an Ichthyosaur known as Shonisaurus—prompted the creation of the state park in 1957. Visitors can marvel at the daunting size of the prehistoric sea reptile during 40-minute tours of the park's fossil shelter and adjacent life-sized Ichthyosaur mural. Tours are offered daily Memorial Day through Labor Day and on weekends until the second Saturday of November.

A 14-site campground offers fire pits, barbecue grills, covered tables, and nearby restrooms. Some of the sites are suitable for RVs up to 25 feet long, and drinking water is available April through October.



PHOTO: CHARLIE JOHNSTON

BIG DUNE

Nevada Silver Trails is renowned for its superb off-road driving destinations, and 500-foot-tall Big Dune, about 25 miles south of Beatty via U.S. Highway 95, is no exception. The Bureau of Land Management-designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern is open to off-highway vehicle users and sandboarders, provided they take caution to not harm the area's endangered desert tortoises. Visitors are also asked not to touch tortoises or remove them; offenses carry hefty fines and even imprisonment. In addition to the tortoises, Big Dune is home to four species of endangered beetles.

CONTACT

Bureau of Land Management
Southern Nevada District Office
4701 N. Torrey Pines Dr.,
Las Vegas, NV 89130
blm.gov/nv
702-515-5000

PAHRANAGAT NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Water in the arid expanses of Nevada's deserts always seems to have a sparkling reputation, and in the case of Pahrnagat National Wildlife Refuge just south of Alamo on U.S. Highway 93, the status is well earned. The word Pahrnagat itself is Paiute for "valley of shining waters." The 5,380-acre refuge is a collection of wetlands along the Pacific Flyway that support more than 230



PHOTO: ELKE COTE

species of migratory birds including shorebirds, songbirds, raptors, and waterfowl.

Water in the wetlands is provided by two springs at the northern end of the refuge and is held in four major bodies: North Marsh, Upper Lake, Middle Pond, and Lower Lake. The refuge is popular for bird-watching, camping, and picnicking at the campground on the east shore of Upper Lake, fishing, and hunting in the fall.

CONTACT

Pahrnagat National Wildlife Refuge
Milepost 32
U.S. Highway 93,
Alamo, NV 89001
fws.gov/refuges
775-725-3417

SILVER STATE OHV TRAIL

The Silver State Off Highway Vehicle Trail was the first congressionally designated off-road trail in the country. The expansive trail system covers much of central Lincoln County, including

Cave, Muleshoe, and Dry Lake Valleys and Bristol, Chief, Fairview, Highland, and North Pahroc Ranges. With the exception of Chief Mountain—which offers advanced riding trails—the system consists of easy-to-moderate paths.

Access to the Silver State OHV Trail is possible from three established trailheads near Caliente, Panaca, and Pioche and various access roads from U.S. Highway 93 and State Route 318. Four more trailheads are currently being developed.

CONTACT

Bureau of Land Management
Ely Field Office
HC 33 Box 33500, Ely, NV 89301
blm.gov/nv
775-229-1800



Wilson Canyon Recreation Area

PHOTO: PAT FIETTA



Walker Lake State Recreation Area

PHOTO: CHARLIE JOHNSTON

WALKER LAKE STATE RECREATION AREA

One of the largest natural bodies of water in Nevada, Walker Lake is a popular boating, fishing, picnicking, and swimming destination about 10 miles northwest of Hawthorne via U.S. Highway 95. A remnant of ancient Lake Lahontan, which covered much of northwestern Nevada thousands of years ago, Walker is one of the few lakes in the world with a population of Lahontan Cutthroat Trout, but due to dwindling water levels it is no longer the robust fishery it was in the past. A 1956 article from *Nevada Highways and Parks* references “12 to 16 pounders [Lahontan Cutthroat Trout] which were netted by the dozen at Walker this year.”

Visitors should note that the lake is no longer maintained by the Nevada Division of State Parks, and if they choose to use its boat ramps, they do so at their own risk.

CONTACT

Walker Lake State Recreation Area
Northern Region Headquarters
16799 Lahontan Dam, Fallon, NV 89406
parks.nv.gov/walk.htm
775-867-3001

WILSON CANYON RECREATION AREA

Wilson Canyon along the Walker River has long been a local hotspot for camping, fishing, hiking, and picnicking. The narrow, picturesque gorge separates Smith and Mason Valleys about nine miles south of Yerington.

About 10 years ago, the area came under the stewardship of the Bureau of Land Management, becoming Wilson Canyon Recreation Area. The BLM maintains a campground and picnic facility that includes restrooms. Campers should take note that open fires are not permitted in the recreation area. ■

CONTACT

Bureau of Land Management
Carson City District Office
5665 Morgan Mill Rd., Carson City, NV 89701
blm.gov/nv
775-885-6000



PHOTO: DAVE HARRISON

In the right light, the dramatic spires and formations of Cathedral Gorge State Park (above) could almost be mistaken for their namesake gothic churches and abbeys. Cathedral Gorge is conveniently located off U.S. 93, just west of Panaca.

PARK PENTATHLON

Five of Nevada's finest state parks make Lincoln County a must-visit destination.

BEAVER DAM STATE PARK

The most remote of Lincoln County's five state parks, Beaver Dam State Park sits near the Nevada-Utah line 34 miles east of Caliente via mostly dirt roads. Although Beaver Dam is open year-round, winter travel is not advised due to the varying conditions of the road and the park's isolation.

As the name suggests, numerous beaver dams along the park's streams are a popular draw, as well as camping, fishing, hiking, photography, picnicking, and nature study amid the park's deep canyons and juniper and piñon forests. A reservoir existed in the park from 1961 until 2005, when flooding destabilized the dam and the Nevada

Department of Wildlife removed it out of concern for public safety. The area around the old dam site offers an interesting perspective on natural re-vegetation processes as it returns to its pre-reservoir state.

Three campgrounds offer 33 campsites with fire pits, picnic tables, parking pads, and nearby water hydrants and toilets. Some of the sites are suitable for trailers up to 20 feet long (longer trailers are not advised on the narrow, winding dirt road to the park).

CONTACT

Beaver Dam State Park
PO Box 176, Panaca, NV 89042
parks.nv.gov/bd.htm
775-728-4460

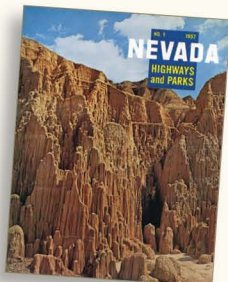
CATHEDRAL GORGE STATE PARK

It's no wonder that the towering erosion-carved walls and cathedral-shaped spires of Cathedral Gorge State Park have been compared to Utah's Bryce Canyon National Park. One of Nevada's four original state parks when the program was started in 1935, Cathedral Gorge has long been a favorite scenic getaway. Photography is one of the park's most popular activities, and some of the best photos lie along the four-mile loop trail that meanders through the majestic canyon.

A campground, in the southern portion of the park about 15 miles north of Caliente, has drinking water, showers, flush toilets, and 22 developed sites

REFLECTIONS

"It's breathtaking; beautiful beyond compare," [Mrs. Al Godbe] exclaimed, "and they call it a 'gulch'! It's one of God's own Cathedrals—I shall think of it as 'Cathedral Gorge.'"



"Lincoln County's New Look"
Nevada Highways and Parks, No. 1 1957

with tables, grills, and shade structures. The scenic overlook at Miller Point is mere steps from U.S. Highway 93 and affords travelers with limited time the opportunity to take in the picturesque park. The park has appeared on the cover of *Nevada Magazine* four times.

CONTACT

Cathedral Gorge State Park
PO Box 176, Panaca, NV 89042
parks.nv.gov/cg.htm
775-728-4460



Echo Canyon State Park

PHOTO: MATTHEW B. BROWN

ECHO CANYON STATE PARK

Following the completion of Echo Canyon Dam on the Meadow Valley Wash in 1970, the resulting reservoir and surrounding area were made into Echo Canyon State Park. About 13 miles east of Pioche via State Route 322 and Echo Dam Road, the park and reservoir are popular for boating, camping, fishing, and hiking.

Anglers ply the waters of Echo Canyon Reservoir for planted rainbow trout, bass, crappie, and the occasional German brown trout. The 2.5-mile Ash Canyon trail leads to the park's backcountry, where many hikers choose to further explore the region's unique geography—courtesy of volcanic activity tens of millions of years ago—off trail.

The park's lakeside campground includes drinking water, flush toilets, and 33 sites, some of which can accommodate RVs. There is also an RV dump station.

CONTACT

Echo Canyon State Park
HC 74 Box 295, Pioche, NV 89043
parks.nv.gov/ec.htm
775-962-5103



Kershaw-Ryan State Park

PHOTO: MATTHEW B. BROWN

KERSHAW-RYAN STATE PARK

When the Kershaw family of ranchers came to Nevada in the 1870s, they settled in a secluded canyon with an abundance of natural grape vines clinging to its walls and trees in its shaded bottom. The family planted many fruit trees and tended meticulously to the oasis and its spring-fed pond. Today, their beautiful homestead continues to provide respite from the harsh desert elements as Kershaw-Ryan State Park, three miles south of Caliente.

The park and its peaceful, shady lawns are favored by families, picnickers, and campers, and a handful of hiking trails provide views of the canyon and surrounding countryside. The 15-site campground has a restroom, coin-operated showers, and an RV dump station.

CONTACTS

Kershaw-Ryan State Park
PO Box 985, Caliente, NV 89008
parks.nv.gov/kr.htm
775-726-3564



Spring Valley State Park

PHOTO: CHARLIE JOHNSTON

SPRING VALLEY STATE PARK

Boating, fishing, and swimming at Eagle Valley Reservoir are the main draws to Spring Valley State Park, 20 miles east of Pioche via State Route 322. The historic Millet Ranch museum and nearby Stone Cabin offer out-of-water activities, and many visitors enjoy off-trail hikes around the reservoir.

Two campgrounds, Horsethief Gulch and Ranch Campground, offer a combined 44 sites with tables, grills, drinking water, and restrooms. Horsethief Gulch, the larger of the campgrounds, also has showers.

The 66-mile Mount Wilson Backcountry Byway, which includes State Route 322 from its intersection with U.S. Highway 93, past Echo Canyon State Park and through Spring Valley State Park, provides a scenic dirt-road drive amid iconic Great Basin terrain. Traveling north from Spring Valley, the byway passes the White Rock Range and Parsnip Peak Wildernesses before rejoining U.S. 93 at Pony Springs.

CONTACT

Spring Valley State Park
 HC 74 Box 201, Pioche, NV 89043
parks.nv.gov/sv.htm
 775-962-5102

PARK-TO-PARK PEDAL

An autumn cycling tour of four Lincoln County state parks.

Rides of 100-plus miles—typically called century rides—are a major accomplishment in the biking world, a coming-of-age if you will. Lincoln County's Park-to-Park Pedal can help cyclists realize the dream of a triple-digit ride in some of the most scenic settings Nevada has to offer.

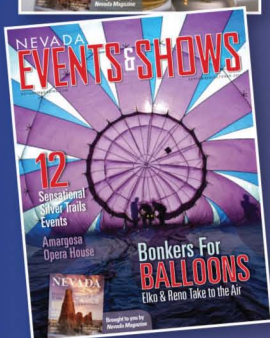
The October 8 event provides the chance to ride 103 miles through Kershaw-Ryan, Cathedral Gorge, Echo Canyon, and Spring Valley State Parks. If a century ride is outside of your ability or desire, Park-to-Park Pedal also offers a 38-mile, two-park loop between Kershaw-Ryan and Cathedral Gorge State Parks, and families will enjoy a short ride through Kershaw-Ryan State Park and colorful Rainbow Canyon.

The full 103-mile ride and 38-mile loop are each \$55, which covers park entry fees, a post-race meal, and a T-shirt. The Family Fun Ride is free, and participants may purchase meals and T-shirts. For registration and more information, visit the Kershaw-Ryan State Park website at parks.nv.gov/kr.htm, call 775-728-4460, or e-mail cathedralgorge_vc@lcturbonet.com.

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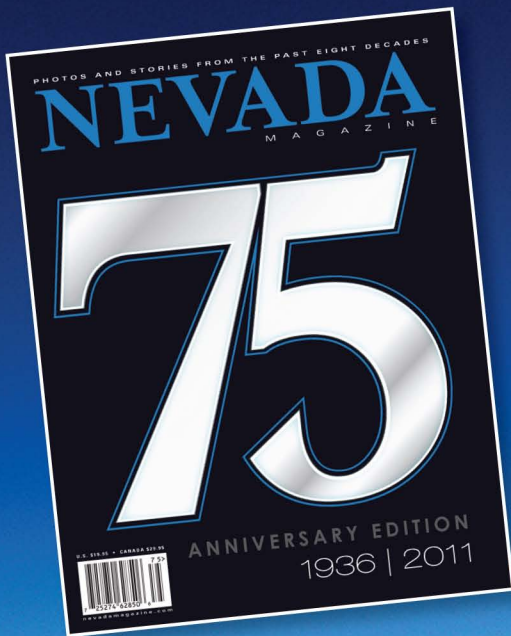
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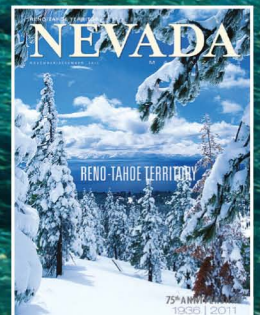
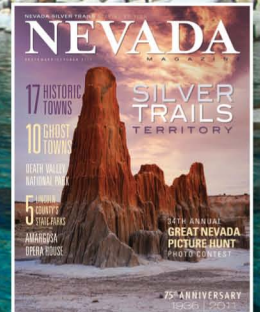
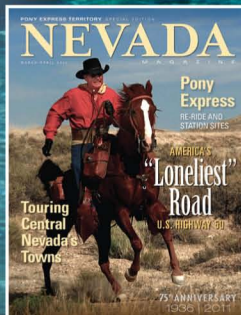
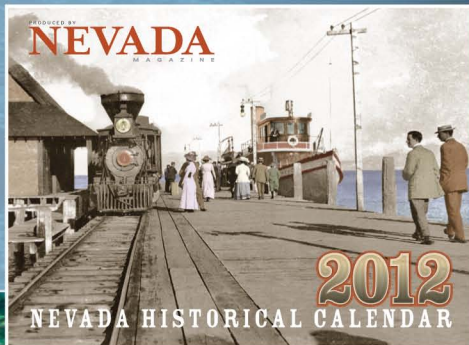


PHOTO: NORTH LAKE TAHOE RESORT ASSOCIATION

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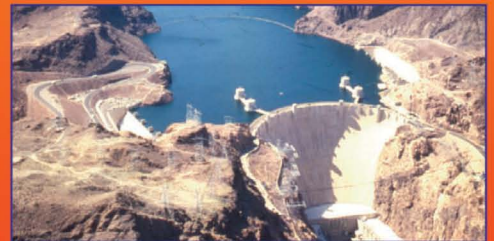
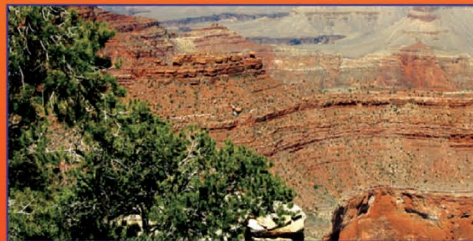
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off the beaten path

Isolated adventure abounds in Nevada Silver Trails.

BY CHARLIE JOHNSTON

For almost 200 years, intrepid explorers have crisscrossed the vast south-central region of Nevada in search of riches and opportunity. From the first American to explore the area, Jedediah Smith in 1827, to the Manly Party, whose ill-fated 1849 journey gave Death Valley its intimidating moniker, and countless gold and silver miners through the turn of the 20th century, Nevada Silver Trails has long been an arena for inspiring travels. Though staking a mining claim of your own might be a little difficult these days, many treasures await prepared modern adventurers in Nevada's largest and most geographically diverse territory.



PHOTO: BRIAN BEFFORT

The 72-mile Toiyabe Crest National Recreation Trail (above) follows the spine of one of Nevada's loftiest ranges—the Toiyabes—from Kingston in the north to the Arc Dome Wilderness in the south. Not for the faint of heart, the route can be difficult to follow, and much of it is near or above 10,000 feet.

*SEE MAP ON PAGES 4 & 5 FOR SPECIFIC OR GENERAL LOCATIONS.

NOTE: NELLIS AIR FORCE RANGE WAS COVERED IN THE MAY/JUNE 2010 ISSUE.

ARC DOME WILDERNESS

If towering snow-clad ridges, precipitous canyons, rushing rivers, and lush fields of vibrant wildflowers sound like attributes of a place you'd like to visit, central Nevada's Arc Dome Wilderness belongs on your next travel itinerary. Anchored by 11,773-foot Arc Dome—Nye County's highest peak—the 180-square-mile wilderness area, Nevada's largest, occupies the southern section of one of Nevada's biggest mountain chains, the Toiyabe Range.

Arc Dome Wilderness can be accessed via myriad trails and from all directions, including from the north along the 72-mile Toiyabe Crest National Recreation Trail; on the steep, craggy eastern aspect of the range at North Twin River, South Twin River, and Jett Canyon Trails; from the south along Peavine and Tom's Canyon Trails near Peavine Campground; and from the gentle western slope of the range at Columbine Campground along the Stewart Creek Trail or via Cow Canyon Trail.

Three rivers—the Reese River on the west and North and South Twin Rivers on the east—and numerous streams drain the mountainous wilderness area and support angler-attracting populations of trout. The rivers can vary from trickles to torrents depending on the time of year and snowpack, so visitors should be prepared for anything from dry conditions to thigh-deep crossings in fast-moving water. In addition to the brook, German, Lahontan Cutthroat, and rainbow trout in the rivers and streams, the wilderness area supports many species of wildlife from sage grouse and chukar to mountain lions and beavers.

Columbine Campground sits amid dense aspen forests along Stewart Creek and offers a handful of sites and pit toilets. Peavine Campground, outside the wilderness area's southern boundary, also offers creekside camping with pit toilets. Back-country camping is permitted throughout the wilderness area. Tonopah, about 55 miles to the south, is the closest and most convenient town with services.

CONTACTS

Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest

Austin Ranger District
100 Midas Canyon Rd.,
PO Box 130, Austin, NV 89310
fs.fed.us
775-964-2671

Friends of Nevada Wilderness

nevadawilderness.org
775-745-7667



PHOTO: CAROL GRENIER

BOUNDARY PEAK & BRISTLECONE PINES

If not for its status as the highest point in Nevada and corresponding place on to-do lists of peak baggers intent on reaching the pinnacles of all 50 states, Boundary Peak (left of center in the above photo) would probably vie for the title of least-visited spot in the Silver State. As it is, only a hardy few venture to the mountain's flanks and lofty summit. The 13,141-foot peak straddles the Nevada-California line south of U.S. Highway 6 in Esmeralda County and is a stone's throw from its higher cousin, California's 13,441-foot Montgomery Peak.

At about 8,000 feet above the surrounding valleys, Boundary affords those sure-footed enough to reach its peak with unparalleled views of the Great Basin to the east and the snow-clad Sierra Nevada to the west. Two routes reach the summit—they actually converge about two thirds of the way up—one from the east at Trail Canyon via State Route 264, the other from the north at Queen Canyon via U.S. Highway 6. Most people opt for Trail Canyon because Queen Canyon Road requires four-wheel drive.

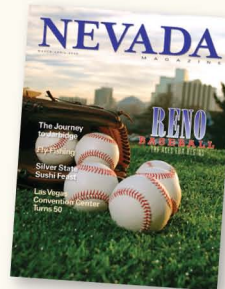
Water is scarce along the routes, so bring plenty if you plan to climb Boundary Peak in summer or fall. If you choose to climb in winter, crampons, an ice axe, and plenty of warm clothing are musts. Hawthorne and Tonopah, each about 75 miles away, are the closest places to find gas and other services.

South of Boundary Peak, in California's portion of the White Mountains, Schulman and Patriarch Groves are home to the oldest living things on earth, bristlecone pines. The groves can be accessed via Nevada State Route 266, California State Route 168, and a dirt road, and the Schulman Grove Visitors Center is being rebuilt following the 2008 fire that destroyed it. The world's largest bristlecone, the Patriarch Tree, resides in the grove of the same name along with the world's oldest bristlecone, the almost 4,800-year-old Methuselah. Bristlecones can also be found in central Nevada's higher ranges such as Hot Creek and Monitor.

REFLECTIONS

*Upon reaching
the pinnacle, I
laid down for
a few minutes
to catch my
breath, and get
some reprieve
from the furious
winds that
were blowing*

*on this winter day, January 17.
It's the highest elevation I've been,
which is appropriate seen as how
Boundary Peak is Nevada's highest
point (13,141 feet).*



"Boundary Peak"
Nevada Magazine, March/April 2009

CONTACT

Inyo National Forest
White Mountain Ranger District
798 N. Main St., Bishop, CA 93514
fs.fed.us
760-873-2500

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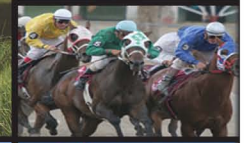
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This project is supported by the Nevada Department of Agriculture through the USDA, AMS Specialty Crop Block Grant Program.



PHOTO: TOM TILL

CAVING—LEVIATHAN & WHIPPLE CAVES

It doesn't get much more off the beaten path than rappelling into dark, mysterious caves in remote Nevada mountain ranges. Such adventures aren't for novice explorers, but for those with the right tools and experience, caverns such as Lincoln County's Leviathan and Whipple Caves provide chances to discover unique subterranean worlds. Both caves require substantial off-road driving and route-finding and are hours from the nearest services.

In addition to all of the standard desert-driving and exploring necessities (extra water, spare tire, fuel, etc.), visitors to the caves should also carry ropes, climbing gear, helmets, and flashlights or headlamps and possess a good knowledge of rappelling and climbing techniques.

Visitors should also be conscious of the fragile environment of caves and be careful not to disturb any formations or wildlife within.

Leviathan Cave, in the Worthington Mountains northeast of Alamo, is reached via a strenuous hike of about two miles and can be descended one of two ways: an exposed 20-foot down-climb or a 100-foot free rappel from the hillside above the cave's entrance. Once inside, visitors will find numerous formations and ponds and passages to other chambers of the cave. Exiting the cave requires a climb of about 20 feet.

A 70-foot rappel is required to enter Whipple Cave in the South Egan Range east of State Route 318. Once inside, Whipple offers cavers impressive formations in large limestone caverns. Among the cave's highlights are a 40-foot column and numerous cascading pools. Exiting Whipple Cave requires climbing back up the 70-foot cliff guarding the entrance.

Central Nevada's Leviathan Cave (above) lives up to its goliath moniker with larger-than-life caverns and formations.

WORTH A CLICK

desertislands.org

If a tour of Randy Johnston's Hard Luck Mine and Castle (opposite page) proves too short a stay, you might consider purchasing the desert dwelling and surrounding 40 acres—it's for sale at \$3.25 million.



HARD LUCK MINE & CASTLE

The Hard Luck Mine operated from 1897 to about World War II. After the war, the mine could not be reopened because thieves had trespassed and taken all of the equipment during the years it was closed. The 40 acres that comprise the Hard Luck Mine and its neighboring Emerson claim were purchased by current owner Randy Johnston in 1998, and in 2000, Johnston started building his castle.

The four-story, 8,000-square-foot fortress has 16-inch-thick walls and was built with 22,000 bricks, 65 yards of concrete, and more than six tons of rebar. The mostly circular citadel uses wind and solar power and has a theater, auto and wood shops, game room, four bedrooms, two kitchens, and a great room with two pipe organs. Johnston offers guided tours of the castle, 35 miles south of

Goldfield near
State Route 276
and Scottys
Junction.

CONTACT

Hard Luck Mine & Castle
HC 35 Box 37, Goldfield, NV 89013
775-772-2413

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Photos: Charlie Johnston



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KEY PITTMAN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

The Key Pittman Wildlife Management Area, near the tiny town of Hiko just north of the intersection of U.S. Highway 93 and State Routes 318 and 375, is a favorite nesting area for many species of waterfowl, and it attracts a correspondingly enthusiastic number of bird hunters.

In November 2010, the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* quoted several hunters who called the hunting at Key Pittman some of the best they had ever experienced. Fishing on the wildlife management area's portion of the White River and two lakes, Frenchy and Nesbitt, is only permitted outside of hunting season (and vice versa). Visit the wildlife management area's website for dates and more information about its various fishing and hunting seasons. Camping is not permitted within Key Pittman.

CONTACT

Nevada Department of Wildlife
Southern Region
4747 Vegas Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89108
ndow.org
702-486-5127



PHOTO: MATTHEW B. BROWN

KIRCH WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

The Wayne E. Kirch Wildlife Management Area, in the White River Valley about midway between Alamo and Ely on State Route 318, is home to picturesque and bountiful grasslands, meadows, reservoirs, and wetlands. The 23-square-mile wildlife reservation owes its array of oases to the White River, which flows through it and provides water for plants and abundant wildlife from waterfowl and fish to pronghorn antelope and sage grouse.

Fishing is permitted on Kirch's five reservoirs—Adams McGill, Cold Springs, Dacey, Haymeadow, and Tule—with boats restricted to five miles per hour or less. All motorized vessels are prohibited on Dacey Reservoir from February 15 to August 15. Like its neighbor to the south, Key Pittman Wildlife Management Area, fishing is prohibited during bird-hunting season and vice versa. Visit the wildlife management area's website for dates and more information about its various fishing and hunting seasons.

Shade, picnic tables, toilets, fire pits, and an RV dump station are available at Hot Creek Campground (also called Dave Deacon Campground), and the nearby 90-degree hot spring for which the camp is named is a major attraction to campers and passersby. Access to the campground is at the Sunnyside Rest Area.

Kirch Wildlife Management Area's five reservoirs (such as Cold Springs Reservoir, pictured above) are renowned for their excellent fishing.

CONTACT

Nevada Department of Wildlife
Southern Region
4747 Vegas Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89108
ndow.org
702-486-5127



PHOTO: MATTHEW B. BROWN

The half-mile-wide, 400-foot-deep Lunar Crater is the centerpiece of ancient Nevada's most volcanically active region, which includes the remnants of more than 20 extinct volcanoes.

LUNAR CRATER

The term "other worldly" is thrown around a lot in describing unique landscapes, but with a name like Lunar Crater, central Nevada's eons-old volcanic field certainly qualifies for such a distinction. About midway between Tonopah and Ely off U.S. Highway 6, the crater and the dozens of cinder cones, ancient lava flows, and other craters around it are the most significant evidence of past volcanic activity in the state. In the early 1970s, the crater was used to train astronauts for the Apollo moon missions.

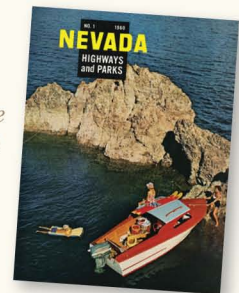
The Lunar Crater National Back Country Byway leads to the 400-foot-deep bowl and other significant formations in the area such as Easy Chair Crater, Black Rock Lava Flow, and Lunar Lake, a typically dry alkali lake bed reminiscent of Northwestern Nevada's Black Rock Desert. In addition to the byway, off-road trails of every description from novice to technical crisscross the region and provide access to other interesting features of the volcanic field.

CONTACT

Bureau of Land Management
Tonopah Field Office
1553 S. Main St., Tonopah, NV 89049
blm.gov/nv
775-482-7800

REFLECTIONS

The crater as well as the lava beds and cinder cones surrounding it have long been regarded with curiosity by Nye County ranchers and miners, but it was not until 1939 that park officials saw promise in the area and set up a sign on the main highway pointing out the dirt road to the crater. Although it still has not been developed as a park, this volcanic area has much of interest besides the pit. From the crater's rim, one can see more than 20 extinct volcanoes in the nearby hills, some hardly more than unobtrusive dark mounds.



"Volcanoes!"

Nevada Highways and Parks, No. 1 1960

MASON VALLEY WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

The 21-square-mile Mason Valley Wildlife Management Area sits north of Yerington amid marshes along the lower Walker River. Its more than 30 ponds are regionally revered fishing, bird-hunting, and even swimming destinations, and its alkali desert scrubland supports many mammals such as mule deer. Hunting and fishing are permitted during alternate seasons. Visit the wildlife management area's website for dates and more information about its various fishing and hunting seasons. The Sandridge Campground includes picnic tables, toilets, and fire pits.

Mason Valley Fish Hatchery within the management area allows self-guided tours of the facility. One of three hatcheries in Nevada, the Mason Valley hatchery plays a vital role in stocking many of Nevada's waterways with trout.

CONTACTS

Nevada Department of Wildlife

Western Region
1100 Valley Rd., Reno, NV 89512
ndow.org
775-688-1500

Mason Valley Fish Hatchery

50 Hatchery Wy., Yerington, NV 89447
ndow.org
775-463-4488

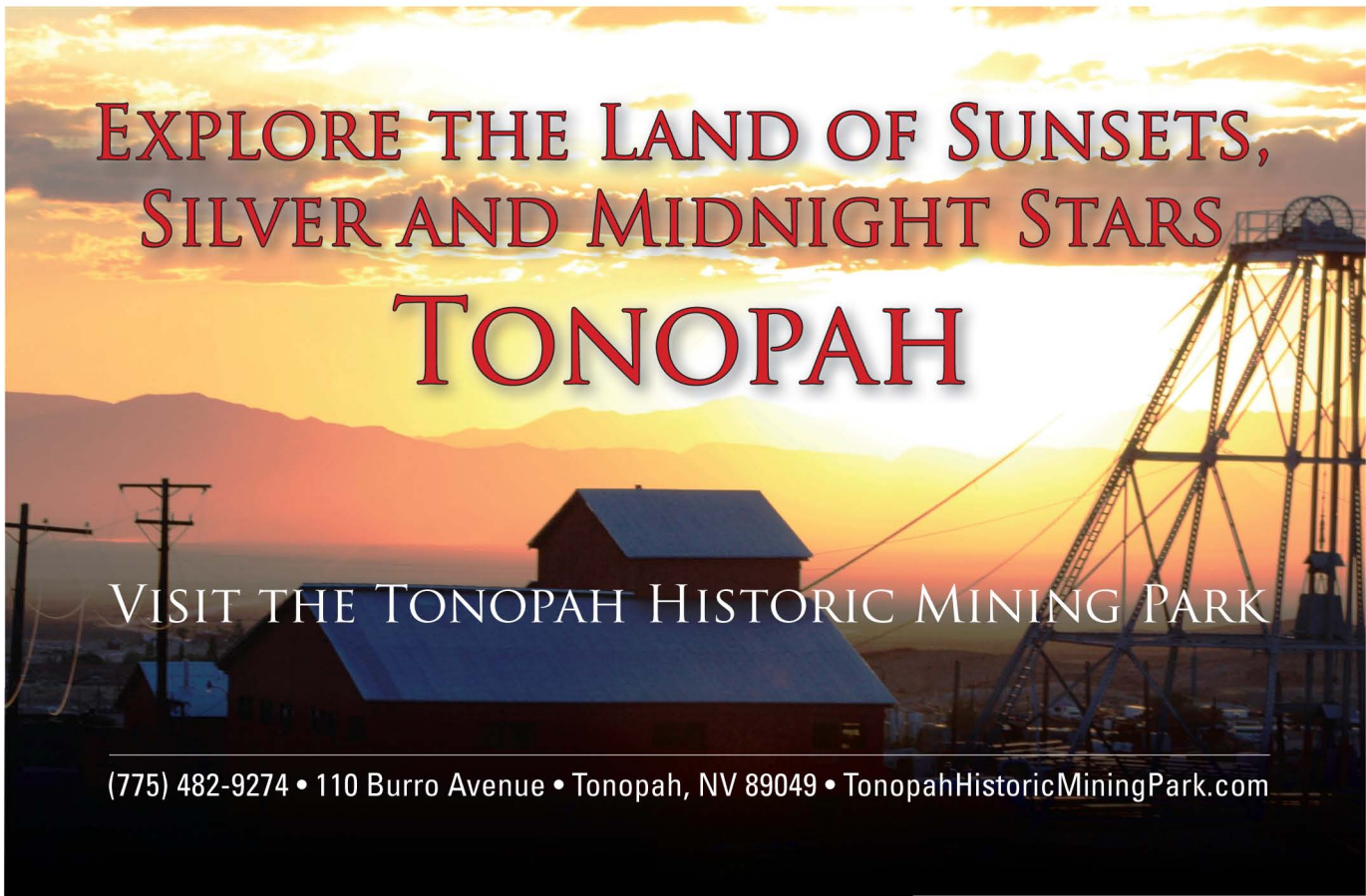
RAILROAD VALLEY WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

The four-part Railroad Valley Wildlife Management Area is home to 147 species of birds, including waterfowl, shorebirds, migratory birds, and osprey, making it one of Nevada Silver Trails' premier birding destinations. Fishing at Chimney Springs and Big Well, Blue Eagle, and Locke's Ponds is also a popular activity at Railroad Valley. Camping is not permitted.

CONTACT

Bureau of Land Management

Battle Mountain District Office
50 Bastian Rd., Battle Mountain, NV 89820
blm.gov/nv
775-635-4000



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ROCK ART

Nevada's rock art is among the most abundant and significant in the entire United States, and Lincoln County is home to some of Nevada's most impressive examples. Following are some of the county's best places to find Native American petroglyphs. For more information, Rock Art Guides are available from the Greater Lincoln County Chamber of Commerce and can be downloaded at lincolncountynevada.com.

The boulders at Ash Springs Rock Art Site are believed to have sheltered ancient Great Basin natives from winter's chill as far back as 1,500 years and today bear the marks of their prehistoric visits in the form of numerous petroglyphs. Ash Springs is a short distance on a dirt road that departs U.S. Highway 93 about midway between Alamo and the intersection of U.S. 93 and State Route 318.

Crystal Wash Rock Art Site, a short distance off U.S. 93 near mile markers 54 and 55 between Alamo and Caliente, is believed to have been an ancient winter habitation site and travel route. Its petroglyphs and a few pictographs represent a large array of rock art types, and many were possibly intended to provide information to passersby.

Mount Irish Rock Art and Archeological District can be reached via a nine-mile dirt road accessed just past Key Pittman Wildlife Management Area on S.R. 318. The site is comprised of three areas with petroglyphs that date back as far as 3,000 years. The mostly representational rock art includes depictions of bighorn sheep, deer, and other wildlife.

Four sites along S.R. 317 south of Caliente comprise the Rainbow Canyon Archeological Sites. The most accessible of Lincoln County's rock art sites (if you can navigate the flood-damaged road), Rainbow Canyon's petroglyphs have been dated back as much as 10,000 years. Etna Cave, within the canyon, shows signs of sporadic occupation as far back as 5,000 years, has produced hundreds of artifacts, and is home to numerous pictographs.

The Shooting Gallery Game Drive District in Curtis Canyon west of Alamo via dirt roads is among the more remote rock art sites in Lincoln County. The district gets its name because of evidence that prehistoric American Indians used the area to build hunting blinds and rock features that channeled herds of large game for hunting. The abstract and representational petroglyphs at the site have been dated as far back as 2,000 years.

White River Narrows Archeological District, along S.R. 318, is 23 miles north of the intersection with U.S. 93. The distinct canyon, which also makes for a pleasant scenic drive, was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1976 for its abundance of petroglyphs.

When visiting these or any of Nevada's petroglyphs and pictographs, it is important to remember that they are at constant risk of being lost to vandalism. Visitors should do their part to protect these important, fragile pieces of history by respecting the sites and reporting any damage they encounter. ■



PHOTO: BRUCE RETTIG

Abstract rock art (above) can take many forms, from swirls and squiggles to parallel lines and grids of carved pits. This swirl pattern was photographed at Southern Nevada's Mount Irish Rock Art and Archeological District.

CONTACTS

Bureau of Land Management
Ely District Office
HC 33 Box 33500, Ely, NV 89301
blm.gov/nv
775-289-1800

Bureau of Land Management
Caliente Field Office
1400 S. Front St., PO Box 237,
Caliente, NV 89008
blm.gov/nv
775-726-8100

silver trails ghost towns

Nevada explorers delight in discovering the crumbling vestiges of yesteryear.

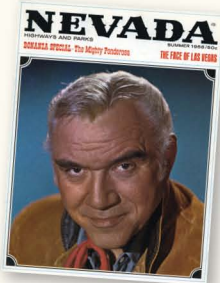
BY CHARLIE JOHNSTON

Nevada Silver Trails territory partly owes its name to the short-lived mining boomtowns that once extracted hundreds of millions of dollars in precious metals from the gray-brown dirt of Nevada's outback. Some, such as Tonopah and Pioche, have stood against the ravages of time and dwindling ore loads and remain viable towns and tourist destinations today.

Others weren't so lucky, their decaying mills and tumbleweed-choked ruins stand today as fleeting memories of their once-glorious past—and testament to the impermanence of all things manmade.

REFLECTIONS

Aurora lay in a hollow in the hills with a few houses, mine buildings, and mills straggling up the hills and into the gulches. On a small rise the new brick schoolhouse was nearing completion, and other buildings dotted the town plot laid out almost four years before, soon after the discovery of Aurora's rich mineral deposits. Small dust clouds marked the progress of wagons along the unpaved streets. Though the location was remote and not easily accessible, Aurora had become the county seat of far-flung Esmeralda County and was now a thriving little city of some 7,000.



"And Then the Torrent"
Nevada Highways and Parks, Summer 1966

*SEE MAP ON PAGES 4 & 5 FOR TOWN LOCATIONS.



PHOTO: NICK MOODY

AURORA

The town of Aurora was founded in 1860 following the discovery of gold in the nearby hills. The \$27 million worth of gold extracted in the following nine years helped the town reach a peak population of around 6,000 before declining ore values forced its demise. Aurora's location, about three miles from the Nevada-California border in Mineral County south of Hawthorne, was long a point of contention—for a time, the town simultaneously served as the seat of both Esmeralda County in Nevada Territory and Mono County in California.

Many of the former brick buildings were torn down and sold to builders after the town failed, and vandals have regrettably pilfered and destroyed much of the site, but some ruins and parts of the cemetery remain.

WORTH A CLICK

ghosttowns.com

BRISTOL WELLS

In 1870, the discovery of silver in eastern Nevada's Bristol Range led to the founding of National City, the first settlement in what would become the Bristol Wells mining district. More claims were staked in the following years, and the region grew and prospered. In 1878, a stamp mill was constructed near the Bristol Mine, and the town was renamed Bristol City. The mill was expanded and a smelter was built in 1880, the same year the town's charcoal ovens (which still stand today) were constructed in a valley about 12 miles west of the mine.

Ten years later, a copper smelter was built. Activity at Bristol Wells declined in 1893, but the construction of a copper leach-recovery plant in 1900 restored mining activity intermittently for the next couple of decades. In addition to the three charcoal kilns, a handful of buildings and the ruins of the mill remain.



PHOTO: ELKE COTE



PHOTO: MATTHEW B. BROWN

Little remains at Aurora (opposite page) due to decades of pilfering. While few remnants mark the former site of Bristol Wells, the town's charcoal kilns (top right) are worth a visit. The mostly stone ruins of Candelaria (above) stand out amid sagebrush and sand.

CANDELARIA

Although they were reportedly known since as early as 1863, the veins of silver in the hills around what would become Candelaria were not tapped on a large scale until 1873. Thereafter the town boomed into the early 1880s, when it reached a population of about 1,500, the largest town in Mineral County at the time.

At its height, Candelaria supported hotels, breweries, a school, a telegraph office, saloons, and a branch of the Carson and Colorado Railway. Lawlessness and harsh conditions ruled the town, which started to decline after a fire in 1883, ironically not long after a waterworks was built. The town rebounded briefly in 1890 but was abandoned by 1892.

The stark, treeless landscape at the site of Candelaria has not changed much in the last 150 years. Substantial rock ruins, including those of the bank, remain along with some wooden structures and a cemetery.

WORTH A CLICK

tonopahnevada.com
mineralcountychamber.com



NEVADA ONLINE

To read about more Nevada ghost towns, visit nevadamagazine.com.

DELAMAR

Delamar was born in 1889 following the discovery of gold in Monkeywrench Wash by local rancher-prospectors John Ferguson and Joseph Sharp, who named the camp Ferguson. In 1894, trading and mining magnate Captain Joseph Raphael De Lamar purchased the region's mining claims and renamed the town Delamar.

Within a couple years, Delamar grew to more than 1,500 residents and boasted a hospital, opera house, and schools. When gold production waned at the turn of the century, Delamar's prominence also declined. By the time mining boomed in Tonopah at the turn of the century—which signaled Delamar's final insult—the town was all but vacant.

Delamar's unflattering nickname, The Widowmaker, was earned through many of its miners dying of the lung disease silicosis. The gold at Delamar was embedded in quartzite, and mining it resulted in a fine quartzite dust, the cause of the often fatal disease. Many ruins remain at the site of Delamar, including two cemeteries and numerous still-standing building facades and foundations.



PHOTO: ANDERS SORENSEN

The foundations at Delamar's mill (above) are the most substantial ruins at the former boomtown. Bottom left: Gold Point's numerous restored buildings and operating businesses elevate the site from mere ghost town to tourist-attraction status.

GOLD POINT

Gold Point was born as Lime Point in 1868 following the discovery of rich lime deposits in the area. Silver was found in the area in 1880, but the discovery of gold and the ensuing rush to nearby Goldfield in 1903 virtually emptied the town. The discovery of high-grade silver in 1908 refilled the town, which was renamed Hornsilver. After 1930, the town was renamed yet again, since it was producing more gold than silver. Mining operations in Gold Point ceased in 1942.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of private landowner Harold Stone, Gold Point is one of Nevada's best-preserved ghost towns. Since the early 1980s, Stone has been restoring the remaining buildings in Gold Point, including the post office, general store, and several homes. Some of the homes have been turned into a bed and breakfast with a main cabin that features dining and entertainment such as pool and shuffleboard.

WORTH A CLICK

goldpointghosttown.com
tonopahnevada.com



PHOTO: NICK MOODY



PHOTO: CHARLIE JOHNSTON

IONE

Ione was the first town born of the discovery of silver in the Shoshone Mountains in 1863. By February 1864, Ione was named the seat of newly created Nye County. The town boomed over the next couple of years but in 1867 lost the county seat to Belmont. Ione experienced varying levels of prosperity until it fell off sharply around 1880.

Ione has retained a small population since its founding and still boasts 41 residents, according to the sign (which also reads “The Town That Refused to Die”) as you enter town. Many original buildings remain, and its proximity to Berlin-Ichthyosaur State Park—six miles away—makes it easily accessible and well worth a side trip.

WORTH A READ

Nevada Ghost Towns & Mining Camps, By Stanley Paher

Nevada Ghost Towns & Desert Atlas, By Stanley Paher

Both books are available at various Carson City and Reno bookstores, or by calling 775-747-0800.

MANHATTAN

Silver was discovered near the site of Manhattan in 1866, but poor yields resulted in the area being abandoned in 1869. The area’s major boom came following cowhand John C. Humphrey’s accidental discovery of a rich ore lode in 1905, and by the beginning of 1906, Manhattan sprang to life with an influx of nearly 4,000 people in two weeks.

The infamous April 1906 San Francisco earthquake caused a mass withdrawal of money from investors, and, within a month of the quake, the district’s mines had all but ceased operation. The town revived thanks to rich ore finds in summer 1906, only to be dealt another blow by financial panic in 1907. Manhattan rebounded again in 1909 and supported copper, gold, and silver mines sporadically until the 1940s.

Manhattan has retained a small population since mining operations ceased in the 1940s. A handful of original buildings remain, some of which are occupied as businesses and residences. The Manhattan Bar & Motel offers rural hospitality and accommodations, and another interesting stop is the former Nye and Ormsby County Bank building. The stone ruins house the bank’s original vault. Inside the vault the bank’s safe sits empty, the door blasted open decades ago.

WORTH A CLICK

manhattanmotelandbar.com



PHOTO: MATTHEW B. BROWN

Ione’s self-imposed nickname, “The Town That Refused to Die,” finds credence in somewhat newly painted signs (top left), although spirits, vittles, nor gas are available at the closed saloon. Above: Aside from its non-existent roof, Manhattan’s Nye and Ormsby County Bank building has survived the last century rather well intact.

RHYOLITE

Rhyolite was established in early 1905 following the discovery of gold in the Bullfrog Hills to the west of the town site. By 1907, the crude camp had grown into a bustling city complete with electricity, water mains, telephones, newspapers, hotels, banks, and even a stock exchange. Estimates put the town's peak population anywhere from 5,000 to 8,000 residents.

Financial panic in late 1907 started Rhyolite's bust period, and the town never recovered. By 1909, new ore discoveries had ceased. A year later the banks closed, and the town claimed 675 residents. By 1922, the population had dwindled to 14, and in 1924, Rhyolite's last original resident died less than 20 years from the town's birth.

Rhyolite's handful of buildings and ruins,

proximity to Beatty and

U.S. Highway 95, and its Goldwell Open Air Museum make it one of Nevada's most-visited ghost towns. While it does not date to the early 1900s, the museum is as much a part of Rhyolite's draw as the town itself and consists of the works of seven artists, a visitor center, and the Red Barn Art Center. The Bottle House—built by Tom Kelly

during the town's heyday, using roughly 30,000 bottles—is one of Rhyolite's most unique attractions. Other partial structures include the two-story school, three-story Cook Bank Building (pictured), and the Las Vegas and Tonopah Railroad Depot.



PHOTO: BOBBIE GREEN

WORTH A CLICK

rhyolite.org
rhyolitesite.com
goldwellmuseum.org
beattynevada.org

REFLECTIONS

The bottle house is a monument to the ingenuity of one Tom Kelly, an itinerant miner and bartender who drifted into Rhyolite during its heyday. He decided to stay for a while, and since construction materials were expensive, he opted in 1907 to build his own house out of the beer and champagne bottles that littered the town site. He lived in his bottled home until 1912 or 1913, when he abandoned it and disappeared into history, like the town itself.

"Desert Bottle House"
Nevada Magazine,
November/December 1980



TYBO

Silver was first mined in the Tybo region starting in 1870, but the town did not begin its boom until 1874. By 1877, Tybo claimed almost 1,000 residents and was one of the most important lead producers in the United States. In 1879, the failure of the Tybo Consolidated Mining Company crippled the town. Tybo limped along until 1891 when

all work ceased. In 1932, the mill started again. Five years later production ceased once and for all, and the mill was dismantled.

A few people call Tybo home today. Most of the town's remains are either gone or fenced off and sport "No Trespassing" and "Keep Out" signs. A sign on the road leading into Tybo makes the claim of "Private Property." Though the validity of this statement is questionable at best, some travelers might be more comfortable admiring the town via historical photos and accounts.



PHOTO: CHARLIE JOHNSTON

WARM SPRINGS

Originally founded as a stagecoach stop in 1866, Warm Springs never experienced any boom or bust, only a languid existence as a place to rest. Named for the warm springs that run through the site, the outpost started with a small stone house, which still stands today. At one point, the springs themselves were exploited and a pool, changing rooms, and adjacent restaurant/roadhouse were built.

While the pool and nearby buildings still stand, they are fenced off and marked with "Private Property" signs. Warm Springs' location at the intersection of U.S. Highway 6 and State Route 375—the Extraterrestrial Highway—results in many passersby taking photos and admiring the site from the side of the road. ▀

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September 10 – 11
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Minden Ghost Walk
October 21
Gardnerville Ghost Walk

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September 2-4, 2011

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Beer & Wine Tasting
October 15, 2011

American West
Barrel Racing Circuit Finals
October 9-15, 2011

Western States Ranch Rodeo
National Finals
November 3-6, 2011

gold finds make nevada history

BY NEVADA HIGHWAYS
AND PARKS
JULY 1936

...In the year 1900 a recalcitrant burro—affectionately dubbed the desert canary because of his braying propensities—which had strayed away from a prospector's campsite during the night, was the indirect cause of another flash of gold excitement in the Tonopah area, which followed the decline of the Comstock by almost 20 years.

The burro had hidden behind a rocky ledge. Next morning, after a typical desert breakfast, the prospector began searching for his pack animal. A strong wind was blowing at the time. After awhile the burro was seen behind the ledge. Being in no particular rush, the veteran of the desert decided to await the passing of the sandstorm. As he sat resting on a portion of the ledge, instinctively he plied his field hammer and chipped off, then examined, a few fragments. It was likely looking, but far from spectacular. More specimens were chipped off and dropped into the packbag.

When the wind eventually slackened, the prospector caught and packed his burro, and together they resumed their journey in the direction of Southern Klondike, a new mining camp in Southern Nevada. Upon arriving at that place he showed the rock specimens to several of his friends. They all declared the specimens worthless. The prospector insisted he believed the rock contained minerals. An assayer, after examination, refused to assay the specimens, also deeming them worthless.

Shortly afterward the desert wanderer and his burro returned to his Belmont home in Nye County. Stopping at the ledge near Tonopah (an Indian name meaning big water), he obtained additional specimens, mentally marking the spot, but not bothering to stake out any claims at the time.

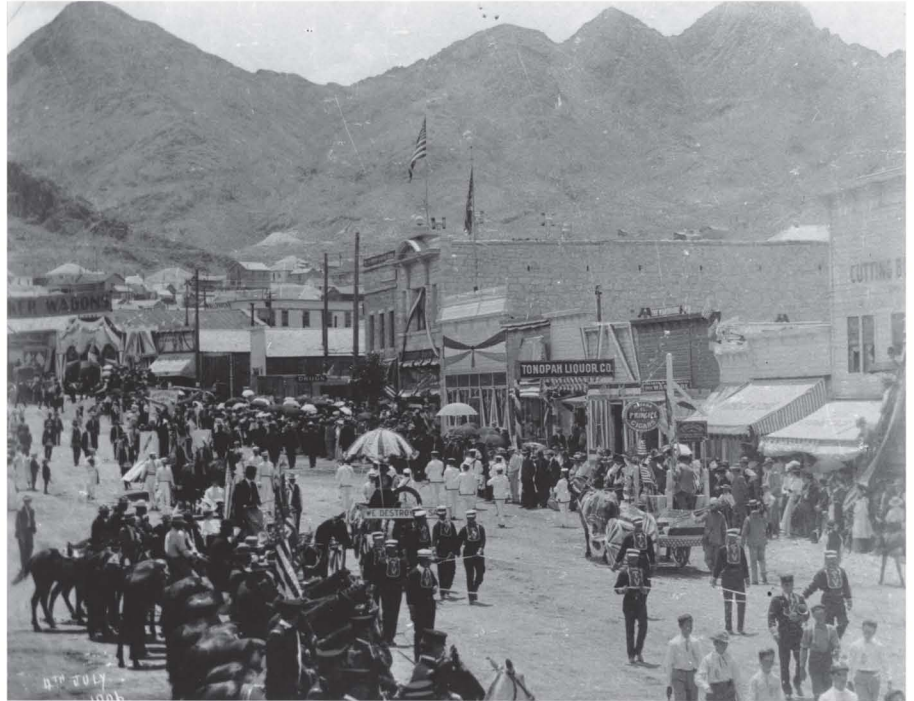


PHOTO: CENTRAL NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Tonopah felt the rush of gold and silver fever in the early 1900s when the camp sprang from a central Nevada hillside virtually overnight. By the time this photo was taken on July 4, 1906, Tonopah had ballooned to nearly 15,000 residents.

Eventually some of the specimens, in an indirect manner, reached the hands of an assayer in Austin. His assays showed values ranging from \$75 to \$575 per ton in gold and silver. Later the prospector returned to his find, took the necessary legal procedure to secure his claims, and started to dig. A new camp sprung up and grew rapidly, for the news had leaked out and became widely known. This camp was given the name of Tonopah, and development of the new strike saw the town grow to a city of nearly 15,000 persons in a few years' time.

Tonopah experienced all the growing pains and human emotions characteristic of a western mining camp. Millions of dollars in gold and silver were extracted from the earth before the decline set in. Like its counterpart, Virginia City, the ore decreased in production, and the city passed through a stage of partial depopulation.

Many remained, however, and kept the faith, optimistically confident of a future revival. Their faith has not been entirely in vain, for Tonopah today is experiencing a steady, substantial prosperity coincident with the increased gold price and the discovery of new ore bodies of considerable extent.

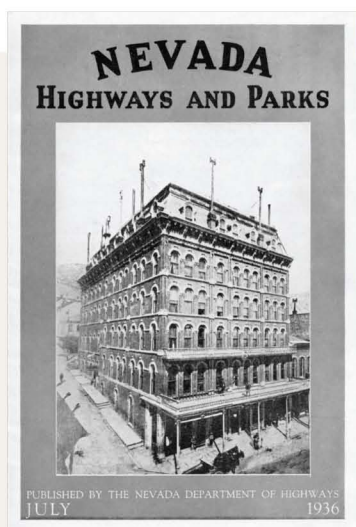
Goldfield, 30 miles to the south, had a similar boom in 1903, and grew until it was a city of 30,000 population. It likewise ran the whole extreme of glamour and excitement. After producing many millions of dollars in metallic wealth, the same story told of Virginia City and Tonopah became the history of Goldfield. The city staged a partial, but quick, fade-out.

Goldfield in its day sipped the wine of bonanza and drank the dregs of borrasca, but the greater portion of its people stuck to the belief there was still "Gold in Them Hills."

Goldfield is now awakening from its ghostly sleep with increased mining activity and substantial prosperity in its midst. New ore bodies of great extent and remarkable richness, either passed over or undetected in the old days, are being found and developed with highly optimistic results.

Other Nevada camps where superficial development brought thrills to the prospector and miner in the early years of the 1900s have had similar experience. Rhyolite, Pioneer, Bullfrog, Searchlight, Fairview, Rawhide, and several lesser lights have gone through the cycle of plenty and pinch.

Rhyolite boasts of a house built entirely of bottles, erected during the flush days, and also a costly railroad station which was used for only a short time. It now decorates the desert, neglected and abandoned, surrounded by the hills from which many millions of gold and silver were taken before the decline. Rhyolite's flash of opulence followed shortly after that of Goldfield. Rhyolite can also point



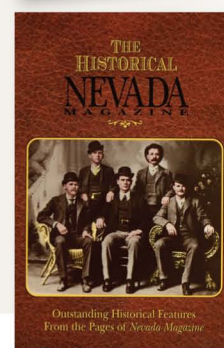
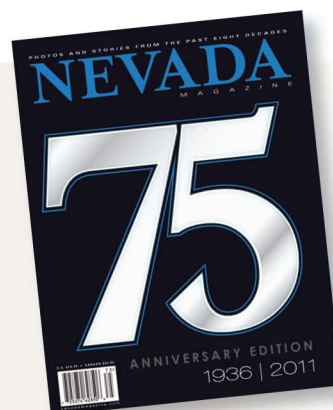
THE STORY

"Gold Finds Make Nevada History" was originally published in the July 1936 edition of *Nevada Highways and Parks*. The preceding is an excerpt from the full story, which can also be found in *Nevada Magazine's* 75th-Anniversary Edition (see above for more info).

NEVADA HISTORY BUFFS

If you enjoyed the preceding article, from the July 1936 edition of *Nevada Highways and Parks*, you will want to add to your collection *Nevada Magazine's* 75th-Anniversary Edition, available while supplies last. To experience 24 stories from past issues of *Nevada Highways and Parks* and *Nevada Magazine*, visit nevadamagazine.com or call 775-687-0603 to place your order.

Also consider...*The Historical Nevada Magazine* book, with historical features from the pages of *Nevada Magazine*. To order the 75th Edition and the book for a special price of \$29.95, e-mail jmgeary@nevadamagazine.com or call 775-687-0603.



with pride to its stalwarts who are biding their time waiting for the revival, which shows symptoms of activity at the present time.

Modern methods in recent years have changed the entire mining outlook in Nevada. The old-time practice of following a burro, and trusting, more or less, to a stroke of good luck for a rich strike has all but passed.

Better roads leading to the more isolated districts; better methods of transportation; a greater knowledge of the geological conditions favorable for metallic deposits; the inauguration, by the State Government, of prospecting schools in which experienced engineers teach not only the fundamentals of ore deposits but also advanced courses; and scientific methods of determining the extent and possible location of mineralized sections all tend toward a more intensive development of the mining resources of Nevada.

Assurance from scientists—conservative men with years of experience and training to back their opinions—that there is more gold and silver wealth lying unfound within the confines of the Sagebrush State than has ever before been

taken out, is accelerating the search for the precious metals.

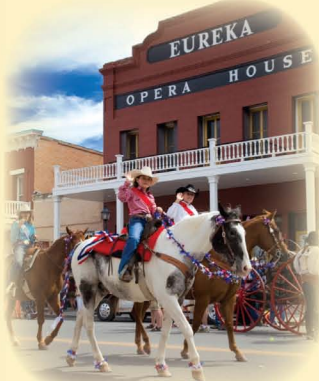
On the other hand, Nevada does not depend solely upon gold and silver in its mining activities. Because this type of mining has been the more spectacular, it has received the greatest attention. Nevertheless, great and valuable deposits of copper, lead, and zinc, to say nothing of huge quantities of nonmetallic minerals of commercial value, are being developed, particularly in the Ely and Pioche Districts, in eastern Nevada, as well as the new and highly potential district of Mountain City, in northern Elko County.

The magic words of gold and silver have been, and always will be, inseparably woven into the fabric of Nevada's history.

Future prospectors, of scientific bent, will continue to blaze new trails to new discoveries, and this will be followed by development, after which these trails will be remolded into modern highways to serve Nevada in the future.

Editor's Note: The unnamed prospector in the story is Jim Butler, still celebrated in Tonopah during the town's annual Jim Butler Days. ▀

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LOOKING BACK



The head frame of Tonopah's Silver Top Mine sets the tone for this issue, which explores central Nevada's "back roads, historic sights, and secret wonders."

JUNE 1995

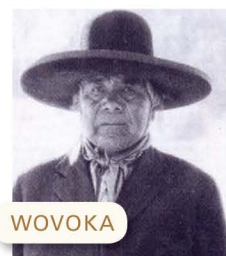
SEPTEMBER

2, 1977 – A United States Air Force F-4E Phantom crashes northeast of Rachel, leaving no survivors.



F-4E PHANTOM

5, 1908 – The Esmeralda County Grand Jury indicts James Bliss and W.M. Walters for the robbery of a stagecoach in Rawhide. Later, a defense witness tells the court that Bliss is actually C.L. "Gunplay" Maxwell, a member of Butch Cassidy's "Wild Bunch."



WOVOKA

13, 1913 – A disastrous flood sweeps through Goldfield. The strength of the rushing water is so intense, the Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad's main line is undermined.

20, 1932 – Wovoka, Paiute religious leader and founder of the Ghost Dance movement, dies in Mason Valley near the Walker River Indian Reservation.



WRIGHT L. FELT

25, 1937 – Lincoln County Power District No. 1 gives a commemorative lamp to Wright L. Felt, Director of the Public Works Administration for Nevada, for his role in establishing the first power line from Hoover Dam to Pioche. The Felt family recently donated the lamp to the Nevada State Museum, Carson City.



BORAX CRYSTALS

OCTOBER

12, 1872 – Francis Smith discovers borax at Teels Marsh, southwest of Mina. Until 1881, the marsh is the center of the U.S. borax industry.

22, 1906 – The first train from Las Vegas arrives in Beatty via the Las Vegas and Tonopah Railroad.

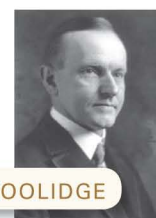
24, 1906 – The *Daily Bonanza* newspaper begins publication in Tonopah under the guidance of W.W. Booth, who also oversaw the weekly *Tonopah Bonanza*.



TONOPAH DAILY BONANZA

26, 2002 – Gabbs and McDermitt High Schools square off in a six-man football game in Gabbs, believed to be the first six-man prep game played in 40 years.

27, 1926 – President Calvin Coolidge signs an executive order withdrawing more than 300 square miles of public domain north of Hawthorne for use as a Naval Ammunition Depot.



CALVIN COOLIDGE

Nevada Magazine volunteer Elmer Wolf provided this information.



The Jason King Band (left) and Peri & Sons Farms' table (right) at Taste of the Valley Art & Blues Festival, returning to Yerington September 9-10.

nevada silver trails by the dozen

Discover 12 south-central Nevada events you don't want to miss in 2011 and 2012.

BY CRISTIANA CORRAO
& CHARLIE JOHNSTON

SEPTEMBER

TASTE OF THE VALLEY ART & BLUES FESTIVAL

The **Yerington** Theatre for the Arts at the Jeanne Dini Cultural Center is a non-profit organization. Every year through donations and benefit events, this institution is able to stay afloat and continue to enrich the lives of Yerington locals and visitors. One of YTA's most enticing events is the annual Taste of the Valley Art & Blues Festival. New in 2011, the event will take place over two days, **September 9-10**. The first Jeanne Dini Ravioli Night will be held Friday, with the music of rhythm and blues band Stompy Jones. Saturday features food and art vendors as well as J-mal Walker's Loose Change Band and the Jason King Band. Tickets to the dinner are \$25, and the *Taste of the Valley Book and Tasting Card* is \$30.—Cristiana Corrao yeringtonarts.com, 775-463-1783

OCTOBER

WILD WEST EXTRAVAGANZA

Cowboys and Indians abound as this annual event brings back the days of gun-slinging and tent cities. The Wild West Extravaganza, **October 14-16 in Pahrump**, resurrects the spirit of the Old West with a step back into the late 1800s. The festival is held in a replica boomtown, where activities and attractions include gunfights and a gun show, civil war encampment, Pony Express trail ride, livestock auction, Native American village, and more.—CC wildwestextravaganza.org, 775-731-3734

OCTOBER

BEATTY DAYS

A trend among Nevada towns is to mark the day of their founding with jubilant annual celebrations, and it is no stretch to assume that many strive to be as boisterous as **Beatty Days**. During Beatty's three-day festival, **October 28-30**, locals and



Beatty Days Bed Races

visitors rejoice in the birth and history of the former mining town in grand fashion with an Old West shootout; 5K footrace; hotdog-eating, root beer-drinking and burping, hula-hoop, Halloween costume, and pumpkin-carving contests; parades; motorcycle events; and the festival-favorite, only-in-Beatty bed races. Food vendors, pancake breakfasts hosted by the Lions Club, and a Dutch oven cook-off ensure revelers won't go hungry, and craft booths offer the chance to lighten wallets on locally made wares.

beattynevada.org, 775-553-2050

NOVEMBER

DEATH VALLEY '49ERS ENCAMPMENT

These '49ers have nothing to do with football. In 1849, hundreds of thousands of people headed west to the gold fields of California. The 62nd annual **Death Valley**



Death Valley '49ers Encampment

'49ers Encampment, **November 9-13**, commemorates those wagon trains that passed through Death Valley (today a national park). Encampment activities—held in Furnace Creek and Stovepipe Wells—include art shows, photography and craft shows, music, cowboy poetry, contests, and more. There are also activities during pre-Encampment, **November 6-8**, such as historic tours and a pet parade. Camping at Death Valley National Park's collection of campgrounds is encouraged, but lodging is also available in Furnace Creek and Stovepipe Wells. Admission to the main event is free, but a membership to the Death Valley '49ers gives access to all the events and can be purchased on the group's website.—CC deathvalley49ers.org

December 10. In addition to lights and decorations in the day-use area of the park, Santa will be handing out stockings filled with candy and toys. Hot chocolate, Dutch oven peach cobbler, cake, cookies, and other treats will be provided. The park asks attendees to bring a new unwrapped gift for families in need. The Saturday event is free, but park entrance to see the decorations anytime thereafter is \$5 for Nevada residents and \$7 for out-of-state visitors.—CC

parks.nv.gov/kr.htm, 775-726-3564

MAY 2012

ARMED FORCES DAY CELEBRATION

Armed Forces Day—unifying the previously separate Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps Days—was first celebrated in 1950 with the support of President Harry S. Truman. **Hawthorne**, having housed the nation's most important ammunition depot since 1930, is a military town, and the town's Armed Forces Day, **May 2012**, is taken to the max with a three-day event preceded by more than a week of additional activities. Parades, food, music, crafts, military tributes, and other activities help honor those who serve our country. Admission to all events is free.—CC mineralcountychamber.com, 775-945-2507



DECEMBER

LINCOLN COUNTY CHRISTMAS

Cathedral Gorge State Park near Panaca features a Holiday Decoration-Making Extravaganza on Saturday, **December 3**. Participants will find holiday cheer while making decorations from natural materials collected in the area.—CC

parks.nv.gov/cg.htm, 775-728-4460

Kershaw-Ryan State Park near Caliente will host its third annual Winter Wonderland and Toy Drive on Saturday,

MAY 2012

RACHEL DAY

Rachel Day celebrates the founding of the only town on the famed Extraterrestrial Highway in 1977. This one-day **May 2012** event kicks off with a parade and is followed by a craft fair, music, games, and food. Camping is free, and limited rooms and RV spaces are available at the Little A'Le'Inn.—CC
rachel-nevada.com, 775-729-2515

MAY 2012

JIM BUTLER DAYS

Another of Nevada's stalwart town-founding celebrations is held in the former Queen of the Silver Camps, **Tonopah**. For more than 40 years, Tonopahans and tourists have honored the man responsible for the silver discovery that led to the town's birth with the lively and energetic Jim Butler Days, **May 25-28, 2012**. Revelers at the annual four-day party enjoy a bonanza of events, such as a street dance with live music, parade, rock and art show, gold panning, the Nevada State Mining Championships, arm-wrestling competitions, food and craft vendors, and a Memorial Day remembrance ceremony.
tonopahchamberofcommerce.com, 775-482-3558

JUNE 2012

LINCOLN COUNTY TRAILS DAY

National Trails Day was started by the American Hiking Society in 1993 in an effort to promote awareness and conservation of trails in North America. This year, National Trails Day events were held in all 50 states, Canada, and Puerto Rico. Lincoln County's ninth annual Trails Day, **June 2, 2012**, is held in **Caliente** and includes hikes on trails throughout the scenic backcountry of Lincoln County. Activities include guided equestrian rides, jeep and four-wheel-drive outings, ATV rides, and hiking trails.—CC
lincolncountynevada.com, 877-870-3003

JULY 2012

PANACA'S PIONEER DAY

Pioneer Day is an official holiday celebrated in Utah in remembrance of July 24, 1847, the day Brigham Young and the first group of Mormon settlers entered Salt Lake Valley after leaving Nauvoo, Illinois. Panaca, founded as a Mormon colony, was originally part of Utah until 1866 when it was re-zoned in Nevada after the Congressional restructuring of boundaries. Because of its Mormon background, **Panaca** celebrates Pioneer Day on the

closest Saturday to July 24 every year.

On that Saturday, citizens are awakened at 6 a.m. with the setting off of dynamite around the borders of the town. Following is a flag raising and breakfast that benefits the local Boy Scout troop. The old-fashioned parade is another highlight of the celebrations.—CC

lincolncountynevada.com, 877-870-3003

AUGUST 2012

LINCOLN COUNTY FAIR AND RODEO

The Lincoln County Fair and Rodeo, held in **Panaca** on **August 2-4, 2012**, is a time to celebrate Lincoln County, its agriculture, and its residents. Rodeo events include saddle bronc, bareback, bull riding, team roping, and barrel racing. There is also the youth gymkhana including events such as barrels, poles, keyhole and flag races, and goat tying. Other festivities include a farmers' market, tractor barrel racing, lawnmower races, and much more. Daily admission is \$5 for guests 12 and older.—CC

lincolncountynevada.com, 877-870-3003

AUGUST 2012

GOLDFIELD DAYS

At one time, **Goldfield** was the largest city in Nevada. It became a ghost town after a fire destroyed most of the city and the mining frenzy died. But its original glory is resurrected every **August** during Goldfield Days. The old spirit of this mining town is revived through gunfights, horseshoes, and old-fashioned children's games. Crowds will also enjoy the parade, land auction, bus tours, crafts, and food.—CC
goldfieldnevada.org, 775-485-3560



Jim Butler Days

PHOTO: BOBBY JEAN ROBERTS

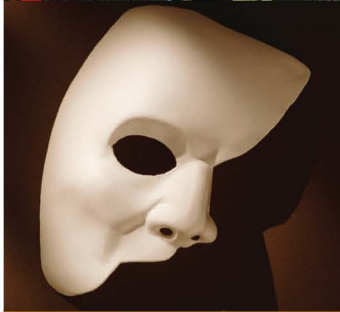
A highlight of the annual Jim Butler Days, May 25-28, 2012 in Tonopah, the Nevada State Mining Championships honor one of the state's most important industries.



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amargosa opera house

Legendary Marta Becket continues to fill the seats at Death Valley Junction.

BY CHRIS MORAN

Talk about the Amargosa Opera House and Hotel, and you have to talk about Marta Becket. In fact, the attraction's official website reads, "Marta Becket's Amargosa Opera House and Hotel."

Becket is the New York dancer-artist who stumbled upon the facility—part of an old Pacific Coast Borax Company town near the southern Nevada border—nearly 45 years ago. She rescued the old opera house from crumbling into history, painted elaborate murals on its walls and ceiling, and has performed on its stage for more than four decades. She continues to draw audiences today, with Sunday performances scheduled for the upcoming season, November 6 to May 6, 2012.

But any discussion of the Amargosa Opera House has to include its colorful reputation as a hotbed of supernatural activity and its unique place in mining

history. Amargosa Opera House is one of a kind. "You'd never find anything like this in a major metropolitan area," says Rich Regnell, who manages the facility for Becket, now 87.

Regnell also helps Becket run the nonprofit Amargosa Opera House Inc., which owns Death Valley Junction, the 268-acre site where the Amargosa Opera House is located, at the intersection of California State Routes 127 and 190 (the junction is less than 10 miles from the Nevada/California border). Becket created the nonprofit in the early 1970s to ensure the opera house's preservation, as she explains in her autobiographical publication, *Marta Becket—A Theatrical Portrait Before the Amargosa Opera House*.

She also wrote of her instant connection to the building in 1967, when her one-woman dance program was touring the country. At that time, bookings for her show were dwindling, and she was search-

ing for a way to continue her work as a dancer. Stopping in Death Valley Junction to fix a flat tire, Becket explored the small town and came across an abandoned recreation hall, the former Corkill Hall.

She looked in the window. "As I peered through the tiny hole, I had the distinct feeling that I was looking at the other half of myself," Becket writes. "The building seemed to be saying 'Take me...Do something with me...I offer you life.'" The life it offered was one of almost unfettered creativity, a place to pursue dancing as well as her other artistic gift, painting.

Becket opened the Amargosa Opera House in 1967. A classically trained ballerina who once danced at New York's Radio City Music Hall and in such musicals as "Showboat" and "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn," Becket embarked on the second act of her career, performing at the Amargosa Opera House, dancing until she was 80. The opera house also became a canvas

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Despite hip problems that have surfaced with age, Marta Becket, 87, still delights audiences at the Amargosa Opera House with her sitting-down shows.

CONTACT

Amargosa Opera House & Hotel
P.O. Box 8, Death Valley Junction, CA 92328
amargosa-opera-house.com
760-852-4441

WORTH A READ

To Dance on Sands: The Life and Art of Death Valley's Marta Becket, Stephens Press



PHOTO: ALVIN TENPO

for Becket the painter: In 1968, she began a four-year project painting the interior walls with murals of a Renaissance-era audience, complete with a king and queen.

"This building, now the Amargosa Opera House, has been home to me," Becket writes in her 2007 autobiography, *To Dance on Sands: The Life and Art of Death Valley's Marta Becket*. "Nowhere else could I attain the artistic fulfillment I have found here."

These days, Becket concentrates on her art, leaving many management details—including most media interaction—to Regnell. Hip problems prevent her from dancing, but Becket has developed "The Sitting Down Show" for the upcoming season and hopes to debut a new work, "Life is a Three-Ring Circus," in February 2012. "She's doing pretty well," Regnell says of Becket, who continues to live in Death Valley Junction, where she, Regnell, and a few others make up the population of "roughly five," Regnell says.

Death Valley Junction is also home to the Amargosa Hotel—where Becket has painted more murals—which sees about 5,000 to 10,000 guests a year, according to

Regnell. Visitors are welcome, but warned. "It's a very different kind of place," Regnell says. "It's kind of like stepping back in time." Meaning there are no televisions, no phones in the rooms, and no cell-phone service.

Oh, and the place could be haunted. "From the first time I ever met Marta, that was something that was part of our conversation," says filmmaker and historian Ted Faye.

Faye, who makes films that explore Death Valley, says he met Becket in the 1990s, and she told him then about spirits that resided at the Junction. In Faye's 2010 film, "Weird Tales IV: The Ghosts of Death Valley Junction," Becket discusses hearing mysterious noises such as a baby crying in the opera house. With a straight face, Becket states that her spirit might remain at the opera house after leaving her earthly life, unless she gets a better offer.

The premise of the film is that the ghosts date back to the area's pre-Becket days. In 1907, Death Valley Junction was a stop on the Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad, which hauled borax—a mineral used as a cleaning agent, among other things—

out of nearby mines. "At one time, Death Valley Junction was a very noisy, booming complex, with railroads and several hundred people," Faye says. "It was a really thriving industrial community. When you look at it now, it's hard to imagine."

In 1924, the Pacific Coast Borax Company built the town—a U-shaped complex of adobe buildings that included what is now the Opera House—for its workers, reportedly in response to a scathing article written by author Zane Grey deploring the miners' living conditions.

When the borax mines played out in the late 1920s, Death Valley Junction survived on tourism for the next two decades, Faye says, but it was on the decline in the late 1960s, when Becket happened upon it. "The second part of [Death Valley Junction's story] is the reinvention of the town as a place for the arts," Faye says. "That is due to Marta Becket's flat tire. If she hadn't had that flat tire in the desert in the 1960s, none of this would have happened. She had a vision to bring her art to the desert, and that was the beginning of Death Valley Junction's other life, for nearly 50 years." ▀

Kick off your boots and stay awhile.



Much in contrast to its colorful past, Pioche today attracts new residents with its friendly, hometown appeal. It's a great place to stay while exploring the surrounding country that includes picturesque locations like Spring Valley State Park, Eagle Valley Reservoir and Echo Canyon. For more information about getting comfortable in the town of Pioche, go to LincolnCountyNevada.com/Pioche.

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PIOCHE

Once a rough and tough mining town, it's been reported that seventy-five men were buried in the cemetery before anyone in Pioche had time to die a natural death. To celebrate its past, Pioche's Labor Day Celebration will feature mining competitions along with horseshoe and softball matches, two parades, and locally made crafts.



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DESERT OASIS

As visitor services specialist at Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge near Pahrump, Cyndi Souza has an intimate knowledge of the spring-filled sanctuary and the creatures that call it home. "It's a fascinating place, yet no one seems to know about it," she says.

Clockwise from top left: male spiny lizards are easily recognized by their blue bellies and spiny scales; it's easy to see how the all-red flame skimmer dragonfly got its name; the Ash Meadows Amargosa pupfish (which is found nowhere else on earth) is one of the refuge's four endangered species of fish; the bright red spot at the base of the rubyspot damselfly's wing is responsible for its moniker; when threatened, chuckwallas wedge themselves into rock crevices and inflate their lungs to prevent extraction by predators; mariposa lilies surprisingly thrive in the harsh alkali soil of the Amargosa Desert. fws.gov/refuges, 775-372-5435

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PHOTOS BY CYNDI SOUZA

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